



Aboriginal news from across Turtle Island and beyond
April 30 – May 8, 2014

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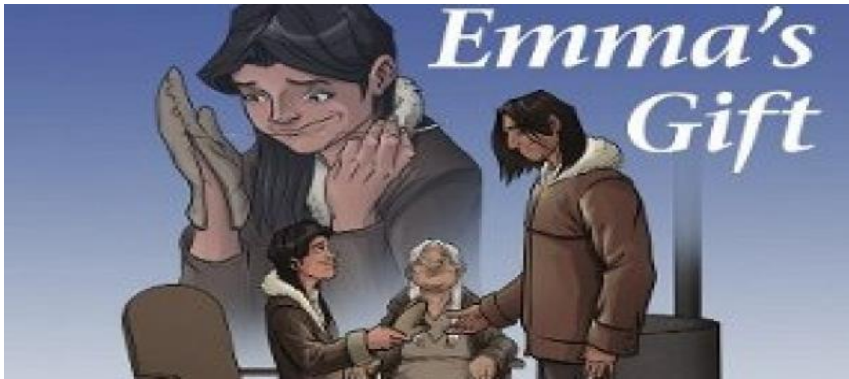
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Aboriginal Arts & Culture

Manitoba Book Awards recognize aboriginal talent

2015 first year the Beatrice Mosionier Aboriginal Writer of the Year was awarded

[CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 30, 2015 6:02 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 30, 2015 6:02 PM CT



Falk has published nine books under her pen name Deborah L. Delaronde. (Kegedonce Press)

Deborah Falk says she wasn't always proud of her Métis heritage, it was something she grew into.

Growing up in Duck Bay, Man. And The Pas, Man. Falk said it was hard to grow up with fair skin but a thick accent.

Now, she uses her literary talents to write children's books about Métis history and culture.

"That has always been my focus, promoting Métis culture through my writing. Especially the historical part because if you don't know where you come from, how can you know where you're going?" she told CBC's *Radio Noon*.

She said she penned her nine books under her maiden name, Delaronde, to honour family and their culture.

Every year the Manitoba Book Awards recognizes the excellence that exists among Manitoba's writers and this year they added a new category, the Beatrice Mosionier Aboriginal Writer of the Year Award, which Falk proudly took home this week.

“My eyes went wide as saucers, I couldn’t believe it was me,” she said.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/manitoba-book-awards-recognize-aboriginal-talent-1.3056438>

Cree cook starts recipe page to honour traditional food

Goose Break in the Cree communities means time to roast goose on an open fire in the tipi

By Lindsay Visitor, Jaime Little, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 02, 2015 3:45 PM CT Last Updated: May 02, 2015 3:51 PM CT



Waswanipi cook Paul Ottereyes prepares beaver (Submitted by Paul Ottereyes)

Need a recipe for 10-hour tourtière with marinated moose meat? Want to know the steps to truss a boneless stuffed beaver? How about the cooking time for a wild goose in a slow cooker?



Smoked fish prepared for a community feast in Waswanipi (Jaime Little/CBC)

The Waswanipi cook set up [this page](#) to share recipes, techniques and photos of Cree traditional food. Thanks to Paul Ottereyes, there’s a Facebook page for that.

“It’s honouring our traditional food heritage”, says Ottereyes. “That’s why I created that Facebook page, to honour our traditional food which we still eat in all our James Bay Cree communities.”

Now that the spring goose hunt is underway in northern Quebec, many hunters and cooks are swapping suggestions for the best way to make sigabon, or slow-roasted goose.

“We like to cook it on an open fire,” says Ottereyes. “We tie it up on a string. It’s a plain old Cree traditional recipe, one of my favourite recipes. There’s no magic about it, just patience.”

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/cree-cook-starts-recipe-page-to-honour-traditional-food-1.3057796>

Documentary about B.C.’s Haida Gwaii wins top prize from Hot Docs

Cassandra Szklarski / The Canadian Press
May 1, 2015 12:20 PM

TORONTO – A film about the aboriginal rights activists, ecologists and locals who have worked together to rejuvenate British Columbia’s Haida Gwaii has won the best Canadian feature documentary award from the Hot Docs Festival.

Director Charles Wilkinson’s “Haida Gwaii: On the Edge of the World” claimed the \$10,000 prize as the jury praised its “stunning cinematography.”

A \$5,000 special jury prize went to Sophie Deraspe’s “The Amina Profile.”

And the emerging Canadian filmmaker award went to director Ryan Mullins, whose “Chameleon” concerns a Ghanaian journalist famous for his unique methods.

Meanwhile, the first-ever Hot Docs short film pitch contest awarded a first place prize of \$30,000 to “Cree Code Talker,” pitched by Alexandra Lazarowich and Cowboy Smithx of Edmonton. It’s about Second World War code talker Charles (Checker) Tomkins, who used the Cree language to help Allied forces.

Second place winner “Sinkhole,” pitched by Toronto’s Nicolina Lanni and John Choi, got \$25,000 for plans to “parallel the lighthearted stories of sinkhole survivors with the harrowing reality of the war for water that is in our near future.”

A third-place prize of \$20,000 went to “Heart of Darkness,” pitched by Edmonton’s Frederick Kroetsch and Kurt Spenrath. It centres on a pair of young TV producers, an eccentric pro wrestler and “42 Persian show cats, a swinger wife, and a hot girlfriend.”

The short film pitch event took place Thursday. Hot Docs concludes Sunday.

See more at: <http://www.coastreporter.net/entertainment/national/documentary-about-b-c-s-haida-gwaii-wins-top-prize-from-hot-docs-1.1871981#sthash.hgNE4Jql.dpuf>

Social media helps reunite Winnipeg woman with stolen indigenous beadwork

Art shop recognized 5 jewelry pieces that were taken from Tabetha Linklater's vehicle

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 05, 2015 3:46 PM CT Last Updated: May 05, 2015 3:46 PM CT

A Winnipeg woman is crediting social media and a good Samaritan with reuniting her with about \$3,000 worth of traditional beadwork jewelry that was stolen from her car recently.

After five beaded pieces were stolen from Tabetha Linklater's vehicle in late April, she wrote a Facebook post asking for help in finding them.

The unique pieces were made by her husband and can take weeks or months to create.

Four days after the Facebook post went up, Linklater said she got a call from the owner of Cree-Ations and Artist Showcase on Main Street.

"He says, 'I have them here,' and I was really starting to shake and started to cry and I [said], 'OK, what?' And he told me, he goes, 'Yeah, we have all five here,'" she told CBC News on Tuesday.

Linklater said she was told that a woman tried to sell the beads, but a shop employee recognized the unique works as the stolen items and took them back.

"You can't be selling other people's beadwork. It would have been obvious," Linklater said.

"It would have got tracked back to her basically, you know, because every artist, whether they're doing beadwork or painting or making regalia, everybody has their own unique style to it."

Linklater said police are investigating the theft, but she's just happy to get the beadwork back.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/social-media-helps-reunite-winnipeg-woman-with-stolen-indigenous-beadwork-1.3062371>

The art of understanding: Student mural explores aboriginal experience

[Tanya Kirnishni](#) [More from Tanya Kirnishni](#)

Published on: May 6, 2015

Last Updated: May 6, 2015 4:41 PM EDT



Margaret Embleton and Albert Dumont work with students Nihal Wadhwapatry, Claire Kropp and Chelsea O'loan on the mural at Pleasant Park Public School.

Màmawi is the Algonquin word for “together.”

The students of Pleasant Park public school have been working with Algonquin elder Albert Dumont as part of the Màmawi Together Initiative. They're creating a mural as a gesture of support for the efforts of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, which was formed in 2008 to document the stories of survivors of Indian residential schools in Canada.

“I've learned that there's a lot more information that people think there is,” said 12-year-old Sidonie Coleman.

“There's been a buzz,” said principal Guido Ronci. “When parents heard about the project they were thrilled. It has their child involved in a current event.”

Margaret Embleton, a mother of two Pleasant Park students, spearheaded the initiative.

“When we first came to the school, and National Aboriginal Day came around, there wasn't even an acknowledgment in the announcements,” said Embleton, who is familiar with native issues from living in British Columbia and the Northwest Territories.

“I felt compelled to do something.”

She went to the school council and asked for funding to organize aboriginal awareness events so that students could go beyond textbook learning.

“There were some huge gaps, not really showing the reality of the modern aboriginal context,” said Embleton.

That was five years ago. Since then, students have been exploring aboriginal culture and history through interactive activities and lectures — and not just on National Aboriginal Day every June 21.

“We did this blanket ritual, to represent Turtle Island before the Europeans came,” said 12-year-old Jackson Hughes. “Everyone was on blankets that represented tribes. Eventually the Europeans started to come so the blankets got smaller and smaller.”

The students said that they were shocked but had a better understanding of aboriginal history.

“The teachers would flip the corners of the blankets to show just how fast the land would shrink,” said Coleman. “There was nothing but a couple of specks of blankets left; people were on their tiptoes.”

This year, students are preparing an art mural of the four seasons. The mural will be mounted on the outside of the school and unveiled to the public on June 12.

Dumont, a poet and artist, has been guiding the students in their work through brainstorming and storytelling.

“What came to mind was to teach the children that there was a time when human beings didn’t celebrate birthdays,” said Dumont. “They lived their lives very connected to the land so what they celebrated was their birth season. They would say, ‘I’ve lived 70 winters.’ ”

Dumont said that by looking to nature you could gain a better understanding of yourself and the world.

“It’s an awareness for the First Nations culture. The original people who were here understood about keeping the land healthy,” said Dumont. “This is a good way of teaching that.”

From kindergarten to Grade 6, all students have been working on the mural — drawing, cutting, gluing and sprinkling everything with glitter.

“Whether they’re 10 or five years old, they’re never going to forget it. They’ll be able to point to a leaf or a snowflake that they coloured and be able to say that they worked on that,” said Dumont.

As another part of the Màmawi project, truth and reconciliation commissioner Marie Wilson will give a lecture at Rideau High School about the residential schools system.

“In our own way we’re trying to say we’re sorry,” said Ronci. “By remembering that this happened we’ll try to make sure it doesn’t happen again.”

Direct Link: <http://ottawacitizen.com/news/local-news/the-art-of-understanding-student-mural-explores-aboriginal-experience>

Can an inspirational man inspire Edmonton to embrace Aboriginal restaurants?

By Lucy Haines/For Metro , May 5, 2015



Lucy Haines/For Metro Christopher Gladue, of Native Delights in Edmonton.

Can the ‘Aboriginal cuisine’ — bannock burgers and ‘rez dogs — that had Edmontonians lining up at concessions at Sir Winston Churchill Square, Folk Fest, K-Days and Taste of Edmonton, entice them into a restaurant?

Christopher Gladue thinks it can.

Two months after he opened Native Delights, a small fast-food restaurant on 118 Ave. near 104 St., the 37 year-old Edmonton restaurateur is working to ensure his sit-down space is a success in a culinary space where others have failed.

“We want to have multicultural appeal, while staying true to traditional foods, so we’ve got elk and bison stew, BBQ bison ribs, rabbit duck soup, pulled bison—the aim is to build a name and brand, but transition to Western culture too,” said Gladue.

It’s an approach that pleases Jules Thomas, owner of the now-defunct Bannock Burger on 124 St., which closed last summer after a short time in operation.

“I wasn’t a restaurant person—I only wanted to say I had opened a burger joint—to be a trailblazer for the Aboriginal community,” Thomas said. “I loved seeing the barriers come down.”

At Native Delights, Gladue, originally from the Big Stone Cree Band on Treaty 8, is intent on presenting ‘love, peace, respect and honour’ in his hand-made bannock and related menu offerings.

The business is currently open all day near NAIT, caters and delivers meals, as well as operating a larger concession trailer. Gladue hopes to expand into the food court at Kingsway Mall.

“I grew up on these very streets—hungry, homeless, in gangs, jail and as an alcoholic—and now we have the only Aboriginal restaurant in town, employing over 20 in the concessions and about 15 in the restaurant,” Gladue said. “If I inspire others, or am asked to help promote the culture, I do it gladly. I feel fortunate to be where I am.”

Direct Link: <http://metronews.ca/news/edmonton/1360746/can-an-inspirational-man-inspire-edmonton-to-embrace-aboriginal-restaurants/>

Montreal Diary: Preaching in Inuktitut

[Morgan Lowrie, Special to Montreal Gazette](#)

Published on: May 7, 2015

Last Updated: May 7, 2015 9:00 AM EDT

Since February, a small group of Montreal Inuit have been gathering for services at the Lachine church under the guidance of Reverend Annie Ittoshat, the city’s only Inuk Anglican minister.

Ittoshat, 45, arrived late last year after completing a Master of Divinity program at Toronto’s Wycliffe College. The native of Kuujjuarapik, in northern Quebec, says she feels right at home ministering to Montreal’s growing Inuit community, many of whom come to the city for medical treatment or to pursue higher education.

“I’ve had members of my community tell me their grandmothers prayed to have Inuktitut services here,” Ittoshat said.

“When you speak and pray in your native language, it’s from the core.”

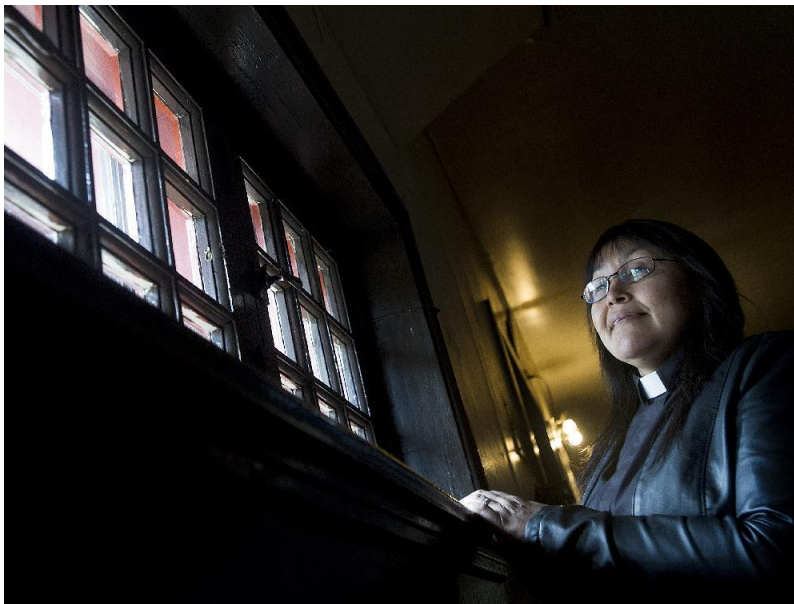
Ittoshat first lived in Montreal many years ago to attend John Abbott College. At the time, she had no intention of becoming a minister. Instead, she planned to study social work at McGill.

But when a friend mentioned Pangnirtung, a remote Baffin Island community that has an Anglican training school, something clicked. Ittoshat's friend told her that a session that was supposed to have started had been delayed, and a realization hit.

"They were waiting for me," Ittoshat said.

Although her husband was skeptical at first — "he thought I was crazy!" Ittoshat never regretted the path that took her from Pangnirtung to far-flung northern villages and eventually to Toronto. But neither did she forget Montreal, and upon graduation she asked her local bishops if she could set up in the city to provide spiritual services to the city's Inuit population.

The church considered setting her up in a ministry downtown, but St-Paul's seemed to be the best fit. The church had ceased holding Anglican services in 2012, and it had a rector's house with enough space to house Ittoshat, her husband and the three children who still live with them.



Annie Ittoshat, an Anglican minister, conducts services in Inuktitut at St-Paul's Anglican Church in the Montreal borough of Lachine.

It's also beautiful, with stone walls and a gracefully arched wooden vault and ceiling. A dramatic stained-glass cross throws light into the sanctuary. The normally talkative Ittoshat is almost at a loss for words when describing it.

"It's just ... wow," she said. "I was amazed when I saw it. It's a beautiful church. To have been given this church for the Inuit was proof that God answers prayers."

About 20 people attend Ittoshat's weekly services. This number fluctuates because many members of the community go back and forth to the North to work. Ittoshat says attendees come from around the region, both the West Island and Montreal.

Although most of her sermon is in Inuktitut, Ittoshat summarizes in English — mostly for the benefit of her organist, who is non-native.

“He’s part of the congregation, too.”

William Gray, Executive Archdeacon of the Anglican Diocese of Montreal, described Ittoshat’s arrival as perfect timing, since the diocese had been looking for a way to provide better spiritual services to the city’s Inuit population, many of whom identify as Anglicans.

“It was a case of opportunity meeting need — a happy coming-together,” he said. “She’s been wonderful, and we really appreciate her ministry and the success she’s had in reaching out to the local population.”

Ittoshat also occasionally gives services at the Atwater-area YMCA, where many Inuit stay when they come to Montreal for medical treatment. Other ministers give sermons there, but Ittoshat says she is the only one who preaches in Inuktitut.

Sometimes she prays with patients in hospitals, and has been approached by a group of Inuit prisoners about giving a service at their jail.

Ittoshat also plans to volunteer at some of the downtown shelters and kitchens where Montreal’s homeless Inuit gather.

She’s here on a one-year contract, but doesn’t rule out staying longer if things continue to go well.

“I’m very happy,” she said. “Montreal seems to be the right fit for me right now.”

She says she doesn’t care if her congregation grows or remains small, as long as she can continue her work. “It’s what I was born to do.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/politics/second-reading/the-hidden-history-of-bob-raes-government-in-ontario/article1314254/>

Aboriginal Business & Finance

Aboriginal representation on corporate boards ‘woefully inadequate’

MARK HUME

VANCOUVER — The Globe and Mail

Published Thursday, Apr. 30 2015, 7:00 AM EDT

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Pamela Jeffery thought it was hard when she started lobbying to get more women appointed to corporate boardrooms, but that's nothing compared to what she's facing now pushing another unrepresented demographic: aboriginals.

"It's tougher," said Ms. Jeffery of the challenge that was the focus of a summit Wednesday in Vancouver which discussed "the gulf that seems to exist between corporate Canada and aboriginal people."

Ms. Jeffery, founder of the Canadian Board Diversity Council and the Women's Executive Network, said since 2010 the CBDC has been closely watching the makeup of the top 500 boards in Canada, and it's shocking how few aboriginals have a seat at the table.

"The representation is woefully inadequate – at 0.8 per cent – for aboriginal people," she said, noting native people make up about 4.3 per cent of the national population.

Ms. Jeffery said by comparison about 16 per cent of the board seats on the top 500 companies are held by women, with females making up about 50 per cent of the Canadian population.

She said it's tougher to get aboriginals appointed to boards than women, not only because of the smaller numbers available to choose from, but also because so few corporate directors have native people in their social or corporate circles.

"Because they tend to reach into their networks to appoint new board members it perpetuates the lack of diversity on boards," she said.

"Each year we ask corporate directors how they identify potential new directors to bring forward on slates to their shareholders. And each year our research shows that four of five directors brought on to boards are brought on by the existing directors. And so typically those existing directors don't have [aboriginal people] within their own networks."

For the past several years, the CBDC has been annually identifying 50 of "Canada's most diverse and eligible board candidates," publishing a list in the hope that boards will step outside their usual zone of familiarity to make appointments from unrepresented groups, such as women and visible minorities.

Ms. Jeffery said she'd like to see more aboriginal candidates being selected by boards, but it is difficult getting momentum for change.

Asked what level of enthusiasm she's seeing from corporate directors, she replied: "Well, we've started the conversation. And you know it's similar to the conversation that I was having with boards 17 years ago with respect to women on boards."

In hopes of making a breakthrough, Ms. Jeffery has teamed up with J.P. Gladu, president and CEO of the Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business, for a series of summits involving aboriginal and business leaders. The next event is in Calgary on May 14.

Mr. Gladu, a member of the Sand Point First Nation on Lake Nipigon in Ontario, said the effort is long overdue.

"Pamela's organization does all this great work. They've got the Diversity 50 [candidates identified for boards]. They put everything out on a silver platter for these corporations and her organization is definitely seeing some success [with women and minorities]," he said. "But with that 0.8 per cent ... it's dismal and speaks volumes that we really have a way to go."

Mr. Gladu said he felt "a sense of sadness" about the low number of aboriginals on boards, but senses there is a growing awareness in Canada that it's a problem. "I believe corporate Canada understands if they don't build relationships with our people and go back to the fundamentals of what it means to do business together, they are recognizing that projects will become more risky and potentially jeopardized," he said.

Mr. Gladu attributed the lack of native people on boards to "fear of the unknown" rather than racism, saying most board directors simply don't know any aboriginals. He's hoping that through the summits, he and Ms. Jeffery can make a lot more introductions and achieve a 5-per-cent representation of aboriginals on boards.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/aboriginal-representation-on-corporate-boards-woefully-inadequate/article24178897/>

Can Six Nations tobacco industry license itself?



By [Nicole O'Reilly](#)

May 05, 2015

OHSWEKEN — Six Nations tobacco businesses and traditional government representatives are firming up details to regulate the industry while the community waits to see when a new law criminalizing contraband tobacco will be tested.

It's been nearly a month since Bill C-10 came into effect, criminalizing the trafficking of contraband tobacco. The law has been heralded by police, tobacco companies and safety groups as a tool to curb illegal tobacco.

But for First Nations, including Six Nations, it has been viewed as an unfair attack on their rights. It's estimated more than 2,000 jobs on the local reserve are tied to their tobacco industry, through large-scale production and small "mom and pop" shops.

In February, the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council — the area's traditional government — voted on a draft self-regulation framework for Six Nations tobacco manufacturers.

The proposal includes a seven-member oversight board that would write bylaws, including possibly setting minimum prices. Licensed businesses would be required to follow rules, such as not selling to minors, and pay fees into a fund to support businesses in trouble.

The draft was presented at three community meetings — the last one a little less than a month ago. The feedback will help form the final version following one final public consultation meeting this month. It is expected to be finalized at the June confederacy meeting.

"We generally heard positive feedback from the community," said Confederacy spokesperson Aaron Detlor. "The support was overwhelmingly in favour for this particular approach; of course, there were concerns which we attempted to address ... to protect rights, but at the same time protect the underlying principles involved in the Confederacy."

He said the Confederacy worked to ensure it was not "an authoritarian or top-down document."

Ava Hill, chief of the Six Nations Elected Council, was among the indigenous leaders who lobbied the government to strike down Bill C-10. She was in support of self-regulation, but says the elected council has been cut out of the process. She would like the draft to be presented to the elected council.

"We've got to get our own act together in the community," she said, adding that she still believes in self-regulation, but thinks the community needs to resolve internal issues first.

The draft was supposed to be discussed during a Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council last weekend. It was sidelined when some representatives began calling for the dismantling of the council's administrative arm, the Haudenosaunee Development Institute (HDI), over allegations of misrepresentation on an energy deal.

Detlor believed the kerfuffle was based on the "misinterpretation" of some documents.

"We've addressed all of those issues," he said. "The chief and Confederacy understand the positions that were taken, and our instructions are to continue to move forward."

According to a Turtle Island News story by Lynda Powless, spokesperson for the Haudenosaunee Confederacy Chiefs Council, the move was an attempt to discredit the HDI after attempts to halt the tobacco self-regulation process failed.

Meanwhile, Bill C-10 is yet to be seriously tested and it remains unclear what will happen if an investigation leads police to Six Nations or another reserve.

Six Nations Police Chief Glenn Lickers has been quoted, including in the Two Row Times, as saying his officers will not enforce the new law. The service did not return a call for comment.

Hill said she's also been assured the Six Nations police will not enforce the law. But she is concerned about outside police and what will happen when businesses transport tobacco off reserves for trade.

Provincial police recognize that enforcing the law "is very complex," said spokesperson Sgt. Peter Leon. However, the service "supports the legislative changes that can be used to reduce smuggling, and the sale of contraband tobacco."

Leon wouldn't talk about "hypothetical" investigations leading to reserves, but says it's the job of the OPP to enforce the law.

"If investigations take us to certain areas, then as police officers we are expected to carry out a thorough and detailed investigation," he said.

Provincial police have good working relationships with reserve police and always try to work with the local officers, he added.

Area MP Diane Finley deferred comment on the draft self-regulation framework to the Department of Justice, which sponsored Bill C-10. The department maintains it cannot comment on regulations it has not seen, and doesn't comment on the legal position of documents.

"Cheap, illegal tobacco can make it easier for children and teens to get cigarettes into their hands and start smoking, which obviously has a negative impact on their health," said justice department spokesperson Ian McLeod. "There is no place for contraband

tobacco in our communities, and this legislation is an important step in the fight against illegal tobacco, and the impact it is having on young Canadians in particular.”

Gary Grant, spokesperson for the National Coalition Against Contraband Tobacco, said he doesn’t think any group can just decide to regulate themselves to skirt the law.

“The truth is they are unregulated,” he said of most on-reserve tobacco industries, adding that it’s estimated there are 50 illegal production plants across the country.

Grant, a retired Toronto police officer, said he’s not expecting the OPP to start raiding reserves, but does hope there will be negotiations and strict enforcement off reserves.

The law “sends a message loud and clear that it’s a serious offence, with a serious negative impact on the community,” he said.

“It’s not a victimless crime.”

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5601646-can-six-nations-tobacco-industry-license-itself/>

Opinion: Aboriginal participation essential to resource development

Leaders understand diversified business interests will improve quality of life

By Tim Gitzel, Special to the Vancouver Sun May 5, 2015



Darryl Bird of La Ronge operates a raisebore mining machine at Cameco’s McArthur River, the world’s largest high-grade uranium mine. The community of La Ronge is within the land base of the Lac La Ronge Indian Band, the most populous of the First Nations in Saskatchewan.

Development of Canada’s wealth of resources has potential to deliver many generations of prosperity for Canadians.

The world needs what we have. Over the next decade, an estimated \$675 billion in resource development projects are planned across the country. This is a truly incredible opportunity.

We can attract billions of dollars in capital investment and become a trusted, reliable supplier of energy, minerals and other materials needed for the rapidly growing economies of China, India and other developing nations. These projects would deliver quality employment and business opportunities for many thousands of Canadians and strong, sustained revenue for governments.

However, without respectful, mutually beneficial partnerships between industry and Canada's aboriginal people, none of this will happen. Almost all the major resource projects on the horizon have a footprint on aboriginal traditional territory. Aboriginal people must be effectively consulted and engaged in the development of natural resources and must share in the prosperity it brings, or the incredible opportunity will be lost.

The stakes are high for all Canadians, but particularly aboriginal people, who are the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population with nearly half under age 25. Aboriginal people are increasingly frustrated with approval processes and project proponents that regard aboriginal interests simply as a risk to be mitigated. Projects are running aground in court challenges and civil disobedience. The need for alternatives to confrontation and litigation is clear.

This challenge is familiar to Cameco, the company I work for. Cameco's prime assets are the rich uranium deposits of the Athabasca Basin in northern Saskatchewan. With ore grades up to 100 times the global average for uranium, these deposits are the world's best. Northern Saskatchewan is larger than the United Kingdom by area and is home to only 37,000 people. These are mostly First Nations and Métis people living in remote communities, some of which are inaccessible by road for most of the year.

Cameco and its predecessor companies have been mining in the Athabasca Basin for more than 60 years. At the beginning, residents were spectators of resource development. Less than one per cent of the mines' workers were aboriginal. During the 1970s, the principle that northerners should benefit from resource development was established and measures were adopted to ensure that they gained employment and business opportunities, and had a voice in the development of the resource.

Over the next four decades, the progressive leadership of northern Saskatchewan has steadily increased the capacity of their communities to participate in the industry. Today, about half of the nearly 3,000 people who work for Cameco's Saskatchewan operations are from the province's north, making us Canada's largest industrial employer of aboriginal people. Businesses owned by northerners provided in 2014 services worth more than \$300 million to our operations including underground mining, construction, environmental testing, catering and transportation. Since 2004, aboriginal-owned suppliers have received more than \$3 billion in revenue by serving our company.

Cameco and our northern partners have always pursued the lasting benefits of building human and economic capacity, while protecting the environment and respecting the traditional way of life of aboriginal communities. Northern leaders understand that mines are finite by their nature and that educated people and healthy, diversified business interests have the most potential to improve quality of life for their people in a sustainable way.

For Cameco, earning and maintaining the trust and support of northerners is key to our success as a resource company. Our solid relationships with First Nations and Métis communities provide the stability we need to support the large investments needed to increase our production. These relationships also help us meet our workforce needs in a competitive labour market. Continuing engagement with northerners — who value the health of their traditional lands above all — reinforces our commitment to protect the environment and operate in a safe and sustainable way.

Tim Gitzel is president and CEO of Cameco Corporation

Read more:

<http://www.vancouversun.com/business/Opinion+Aboriginal+participation+essential+resource+development/11031322/story.html#ixzz3ZTLT1200>

Closing the Gap Between Aboriginal Business Leaders and Corporate Canada

Posted: 05/07/2015 12:54 pm EDT Updated: 05/07/2015 12:59 pm EDT



Last week, we hosted the first of two joint Summits in Vancouver between our organizations, The Canadian Council for Aboriginal Business (CCAB) and The Canadian Board Diversity Council (CBDC). Both Summits focus on board governance, kick starting a critical national dialogue about the merits of strengthening these communication lines between Corporate Canada and aboriginal business leaders.

Maybe it was a product of Vancouver's spring in full bloom, but there was a definite sense of optimism in the room. Or perhaps it was, as we suspected, that Corporate

Canada is interested and eager to close the gap between these communities, they just aren't certain of the "how."

In order for this to be a true collaboration, that "how" has to be created through open dialogue, first to raise awareness and then to problem solve based on ideas and models from both sides.

The Vancouver Summit brought together aboriginal leaders, academics and Corporate Canada, all with the mindset of figuring out how to work together toward a common goal of equitable sustainable prosperity for all Canadians.

The event began with a dynamic panel, including Kim Baird, Founder of Kim Baird Strategic Consulting, Dave Tuccaro, Founder, President & CEO of Tuccaro Inc., and Cliff Fregin, CEO of New Relationship Trust. The talk was moderated by Dr. Mark Selman, Director, Executive MBA cohort for Aboriginal Business & Leadership at Beedie School of Business.

"We've provided some ideas around where our First Nations are, economically and capacity-wise," said Cliff Fregin afterward in an interview. "The more [everyone] understands what's happening in First Nations traditional territories around business, they're going to realize First Nations are open to business, to being involved in activity, especially if that's happening in their traditional territories."

Relations between aboriginal communities and Corporate Canada are rapidly evolving. The Prince Rupert-based Lax Kw'alaams band recently received a billion dollar offer from a joint venture led by Malaysia's state owned Petronas to approve the Pacific Northwest LNG project. Significant benefits naturally come along with such a project, including job training and employment for the area. But Petronas was, just a year ago, cited as having no idea how to successfully operate in Canada with Aboriginal Peoples. Canada cannot expect to see a real impact of economic growth on deals like this without all sides coming together to bridge the gap.

Ground-breaking change is needed. And the time is now. CBDC's Annual Report Card found that [less than one per cent](#) of directors on FP 500 boards were aboriginal, even though the aboriginal community in Canada is the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population, representing [4.3 per cent of the overall population in 2011](#). This growth, combined with the rich natural resources of aboriginal communities and their traditional territories, makes it essential for Corporate Canada to understand the needs of this demographic.

And so, after a powerhouse panel of experts in aboriginal matters in our evolving business landscape, we opened up the conversation to those in attendance during two breakout sessions. We posed the questions: How can Corporate Canada effectively engage aboriginal stakeholders in this new environment? What are some diverse governance models? The ideas about how to answer these came flooding in.

“I think the future of Canada’s economy is dependent on us figuring out how to have better relationships between First Nations people, government and industry,” said Kim Baird. “These dialogues are a critical start for those future directions and a safe way to start collaborating and identifying some opportunities for filling the gap.”

Attendees were clearly engaged in this critical start, offering up their experience and brainstorming ideas that were not only taken back to the larger group but also to their companies, some of the country’s top employers.

Aboriginal peoples have used their entrepreneurial skills to build their businesses against a backdrop of institutionalized social and economic challenges. What was clear throughout the day was that it makes sense to combine this wealth of experience from diverse and alternative perspectives with Corporate Canada’s current governance models and achieve even greater success together.

At this Vancouver Summit possibility was blossoming. In Calgary, on May 14, we hope to keep the conversation going with even more individuals and companies during our second summit. Just like spring time, change is indeed in the air.

J.P. Gladu, President and CEO, CCAB, and Joint Summit Partner Pamela Jeffery, Founder, CBDC

We welcome the public to join us on May 14 for our second Summit in Calgary, featuring a panel discussion with John Carruthers, President, Enbridge Northern Gateway Pipelines, Regional Chief Jody Wilson-Raybould, British Columbia Assembly of First Nations, Thomas Isaac, Partner, Osler Hoskin and Harcourt’s Aboriginal Law Group, Mel E. Benson, Corporate Director, Suncor, Dr. Marie Delorme, CEO, The Imagination Group of Companies, and our moderator Deborah Yedlin, Business Columnist, Calgary Herald.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/jean-paul-gladu/aboriginal-business-leaders_b_7226046.html

Salisbury House opens doors in Norway House

First Sals to open on a First Nation

Posted: 05/4/2015 7:19 AM

An iconic Winnipeg eatery celebrates the opening its first restaurant on a First Nation today.

Today is the grand opening of a Salisbury House restaurant at Norway House Cree Nation.

The celebration begins at 1 p.m. with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, speeches by local dignitaries and coffee and red velvet cake for the guests.

The 24-hour Sals will open to the public Tuesday at 6 a.m..

The new restaurant is located on the main level of the Kinosao Sipi Multiplex inside the first nation's economic development zone. It is a Sals Xpress-style restaurant with all the Sals favourites like cheese nips and red velvet cake. The new restaurant seats 128 people and includes a 48-seat private room that can be reserved for family functions and business meetings.

It's the first Sals to open on a reserve and has created 40 full-time and part-time jobs for community members – and it came about quickly, Chief Ron Evans said in a press release.

"The fact that we have been able to see this vision become a reality in only six months' time, truly exemplifies what First Nations and the business community can do when we work together."

Salisbury House has been a Winnipeg institution since 1931. Norway House has close to 7,500 members and is located at the north end of Lake Winnipeg at the confluence of the Nelson River.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/business/Salisbury-House-opens-doors-in-Norway-House-302402141.html>

Participation of First Nations vital to success

By Tim Gitzel, The Starphoenix May 7, 2015

Gitzel is president and CEO of Cameco Corporation.

Development of Canada's wealth of resources has potential to deliver many generations of prosperity for Canadians.

We have what the world needs. Over the next decade, an estimated \$675 billion in resource development projects are planned across Canada. This is a truly incredible opportunity.

We can attract billions in capital investment and become a trusted, reliable supplier of energy, minerals and other materials for the rapidly growing economies of China, India and other developing nations. These projects would deliver high-quality employment and business opportunities for many thousands of Canadians and strong, sustained revenue for governments.

However, without respectful, mutually beneficial partnerships between industry and Canada's aboriginal people, none of this will happen.

Almost all of the major resource projects on the horizon have a footprint on aboriginal traditional territory. Aboriginal people must be effectively consulted and engaged in the development of natural resources and must share in the prosperity it brings. Otherwise, the incredible opportunity will be lost.

The stakes are high for all Canadians but particularly for aboriginal people, who are the fastest-growing segment of the Canadian population with nearly half under age 25. Indigenous people are increasingly frustrated with approval processes and project proponents who regard aboriginal interests simply as a risk to be mitigated.

Projects are running aground in court challenges and civil disobedience. The need for alternatives to confrontation and litigation is clear.

This challenge is familiar to Cameco. Our company's prime assets are the rich uranium deposits of the Athabasca Basin in Northern Saskatchewan. With ore grades up to 100 times the global average for uranium, these deposits are the world's best.

Northern Saskatchewan is larger than the United Kingdom by area, but is home to only 37,000 people. These are mostly First Nations and Metis people living in remote communities, some of which are inaccessible by road for most of the year.

Cameco and its predecessor companies have been mining in the Athabasca Basin for more than 60 years. At the beginning, local people were spectators to resource development. Less than one per cent of the mines' workers were aboriginal.

During the 1970s, the principle that northerners should benefit from resource development was established and measures were adopted to ensure they gained employment and business opportunities and had a voice in the development of the resource.

Over the next four decades, the progressive leadership of Northern Saskatchewan has steadily increased the capacity of their communities to participate in the industry. Today, about half of the nearly 3,000 people who work for Cameco's Saskatchewan operations are from the province's North, making us Canada's largest industrial employer of aboriginal people.

In 2014, businesses owned by northerners provided services worth more than \$300 million to our operations, including underground mining, construction, environmental testing, catering and transportation. Since 2004, aboriginal-owned suppliers have received more than \$3 billion in revenue by serving our company.

Cameco and our northern partners have always pursued the lasting benefits of building human and economic capacity while protecting the environment and respecting the traditional way of life of aboriginal communities. Northern leaders understand mines are finite by their nature and educated people and healthy, diversified business interests have the most potential to improve quality of life for their people in a sustainable way.

For Cameco, earning and maintaining the trust and support of northerners is key to our success as a resource company. Our solid relationships with First Nations and Metis communities provide the stability we need to support the large investments needed to increase our production.

These relationships also help us meet our workforce needs in a competitive labour market. Continuing engagement with northerners - who value the health of their traditional lands above all - reinforces our commitment to protect the environment and operate in a safe and sustainable way.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/business/Participation+First+Nations+vital+success/11036013/story.html>

Aboriginal Community Development

Six Nations declares state of emergency after chemical fire at dump



Josh Elliott, CTVNews.ca

Published Saturday, May 2, 2015 2:20PM EDT

Last Updated Sunday, May 3, 2015 5:28PM EDT

Officials at a First Nations reserve near Brantford, Ont., have declared a state of emergency amid fears that the chemical runoff from a dump fire could have long-lasting health and environmental consequences.

The state of emergency comes days after a chemical fire broke out near the household hazardous waste area of a dump at the Six Nations of the Grand River reserve on Wednesday afternoon.

The initial fire produced heavy smoke, several explosions and flaming streams of chemical runoff, the Six Nations Council said in a statement on Friday. Fire crews extinguished the flames but remained on the scene in case they re-ignited.

“The chemical runoff has been contained for the moment, however the site still poses serious health and safety risks to those in the immediate vicinity,” the council said.

The dump has been closed off and the problem area quarantined since Wednesday. A hazardous materials team has been called in to investigate, the council said.

Six Nations fire chief Matthew Miller says the fire is out but it could re-ignite, which would pose a challenge for his crew. “We’re not equipped to deal with hazardous material response,” Miller [told CTV Kitchener](#) on Saturday.

Six Nations of the Grand River chief Ava Hill declared the state of emergency on Friday. Federal and provincial authorities have been notified and are “corresponding” with the reserve to deal with the “unknown chemical mixture,” the council said.

Hill said she’s open to any financial assistance the federal or provincial governments can offer. “It’s not going to be cheap for us to get it cleaned up,” she said.

The federal government is spearheading the response and working with the province to resolve the matter, a spokesperson for the Ontario Ministry of the Environment and Climate Change told CTV News in a statement.

The fire broke out in an area of the dump where waste paint cans and aerosol containers are kept.

Officials have set up an 800-metre evacuation zone around the fire site. That radius will double to 1,600 metres if the fire starts up again, meaning six families will be forced to leave their homes.

The reserve has set up an alternate waste disposal site while it waits for the cleanup.

“The Six Nations Elected Council’s priorities at this moment are for the safety of our community members, and the protection of the environment,” the council said.

The reserve is home to about 12,000 people.

Direct Link: <http://www.ctvnews.ca/canada/six-nations-declares-state-of-emergency-after-chemical-fire-at-dump-1.2355728>

Petition Started to Keep Pastor of Aboriginal Catholic Church in Edmonton

[National News](#) | May 5, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#)



Father Jim Holland stands inside the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples in Edmonton/Photo Brandi Morin

Brandi Morin

APTN National News

EDMONTON — A petition is circulating in Edmonton to keep a pastor who helps inner city First Nations, Metis and Inuit at his current location.

Pastor Jim Holland, 72, also known as Father Jim, is the head of the Sacred Heart Church of the First Peoples, the only Catholic church that has been declared an official national parish for First Nation, Metis and Inuit peoples.

For 20 years, Holland has worked to bridge gaps between the church and the Aboriginal community.

“I have built up a trust and a relationship,” said Holland. “Most of these people think that I belong to them, like I’m part of their family, because I am.”

He is now being transferred.

Holland recently learned from his superiors at the Missionary Oblates of Mary Immaculate that he will be moved to an isolated community either in northern Saskatchewan or on Vancouver Island.

He said although he is getting up there in age, he still has good health and a passion to continue his work at Sacred Heart.

“What they want to do is take me out of here and bring those people in who don’t understand what’s going on here,” said Holland. “It doesn’t make any sense- it’s a total disrespect for our First Nations people because this is their home.”

The online petition titled “Appeal to the Catholic Diocese of Edmonton to keep Father Jim Holland as the Pastor of Sacred Heart” states that the removal of Holland from Sacred Heart will have a huge impact on the Aboriginal community.

It also states: “Sacred Heart Church is a world renowned church due to its unique and holistic services that it provides for the Aboriginal people in Edmonton and area. Aboriginal people from everywhere make it a priority to attend the services at Sacred Heart Church whenever they are in the City of Edmonton. The negative impacts of the residential schools system on Aboriginal people has created a deep rift on their faith, their trust and their ability to have a positive outlook with the Catholic Church. Father Jim Holland, however, has been the catalyst for restoring the Christian faith, and building trusting relationships between the Catholic Church and the aboriginal community within Edmonton and beyond.”

Edmonton First Nations artist Wayne Ashley started the paper petition and says that if Holland leaves, the church will lose a lot of its members because it’s not that easy to build up trust within the Aboriginal community.

“He’s always stood behind me and I see him with native culture and the way he implements it,” said Ashley. “And his understanding of the way we do things is original and somebody like that that put 20 years into the church should be respected and we as a people should respect it.”

Doris Tourangeau who signed the online petition and identified herself as a residential school survivor shared her sentiments toward Holland,

“Father Jim has been a spiritual force in my healing journey,” said Tourangeau. “He has shown me over the many years to be closer to my higher power I need to forgive...many thanks Father Jim for your kind and compassionate words they have always followed me on my journey of healing.”



Sacred Heart Church of First Peoples in Edmonton

If Holland does end up having to leave, the petitioners are asking for more time so that new relationships can be built within the Aboriginal community.

“Father Jim is right for us, so, the people that are coming in we’re not saying no to them, but what we’re saying is that we need a two to three year transition period for them to work under Father Jim and develop the relationship with the community,” said Ashley.

Holland said he is proud that the church members are using their voices because the church belongs to them.

“I feel great about it because they are speaking out,” said Holland. “I am more than willing to stay if everything works out.”

The online petition currently has 2,217 signatures and growing.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/05/petition-started-keep-pastor-aboriginal-catholic-church-edmonton/>

Aboriginal Crime, Justice & Law Enforcement

Baddeck court closure means more jail time for aboriginal people, worker fears

Mi’kmaq translator says many clients will struggle to get to other facilities

By Jack Julian, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 01, 2015 6:40 AM AT Last Updated: May 01, 2015 6:40 AM AT



Baddeck's courthouse is scheduled to be closed. (Submitted)

A Mi'kmaq court worker in Cape Breton says a plan to close the satellite courthouse in Baddeck will lead to more jail time for aboriginal people.

Barry Bernard also predicts those increased incarceration costs will erase any savings the provincial government hopes to achieve.

"It's going to cause hardship. It's closing the Baddeck court door, but it's opening the jailhouse doors for aboriginal people," he says.

Keep that courthouse in Baddeck open until we figure out a solution that would work.-
Chief Roderick Googoo

The Justice Department has announced plans to close seven satellite courthouses around Nova Scotia in the next six months.

The government says closing the Baddeck courthouse will save \$62,232 a year. The court sits three and a half days a month.

Bernard travels from Sydney to Baddeck to work as a translator and court navigator with the Mi'kmaq Legal Support Network. He says more than half the court's docket is Mi'kmaq people from the nearby communities of Wagmatcook and We'koma'q. He estimates he sees 100 Mi'kmaq clients a year in Baddeck.

No public transit options

It takes 12 minutes to drive to Baddeck from We'koma'q. The drive from Wagmatcook is about 22 minutes. Bernard says many of his clients have no cars. He says they hitchhike to court, or are driven by relatives, social workers and addictions workers.

Bernard says moving court dates to Sydney will put travel time up to an hour with no option for public transit. He says people on income assistance can't afford a \$40 taxi ride.

"A lot of our clients that I know would rather spend their money on food for their family because they live on a fixed income," he said.

Bernard predicts many of his clients will miss court dates, and wind up with bench warrants for failure to appear.

“They’re going to eliminate the cost of having a Baddeck court. But what’s going to happen, it’s going to cost more for them to pay the RCMP to pick up people and take them to jail cells in Sydney,” he said.

Bernard thinks this goes against the spirit of the Marshall Inquiry and its recommendations to make Nova Scotia’s justice system more accessible to aboriginal people.

Could harm relationship with police

We’koma’q Chief Roderick Googoo is concerned the change could harm his community’s relationship with the RCMP.

“We have a good relationship with the police now. But now, when they’re sent out to pick up people on bench warrants because they can’t appear in court, that’s going to erode some of the relationship that we have developed over the years with them,” he says.

Googoo urges the Justice Department to delay the closure. “Keep that courthouse in Baddeck open until we figure out a solution that would work not only for our people but would also work for the justice system too,” he said.

Googoo wants to raise the issue when 13 Mi’kmaq chiefs meet with Premier Stephen McNeil and his cabinet in Halifax on May 22.

Nova Scotia Justice Minister Lena Diab recognizes the impact of closing satellite courts around the province.

‘There is some inconvenience’

“We acknowledge that there is some inconvenience that will be experienced by court users,” she said.

Diab says the province has a plan to help mitigate those effects.

“We do have a transition plan in place that will assist people that need to get to court. We’re working with our partners in policing as well,” she said.

“One really important thing that we have launched is video conferencing in the courtrooms. So that will allow people to be heard, but not in a courtroom setting.”

Justice Department spokeswoman Michelle Lucas said there are no details yet about how the transition plan will address challenges faced by Mi'kmaq accused in Baddeck area.

“Some of the facts you are looking for are unavailable at this time, as they are part of the conversations we will have to ensure a smooth transition,” she said.

Distances to court

- Wagmatcook to Baddeck: 16 kilometres
- Wagmatcook to Sydney: 93 kilometres
- We'kaqma'q to Baddeck: 41 kilometres
- We'kaqma'q to Sydney: 124 kilometres

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/baddeck-court-closure-means-more-jail-time-for-aboriginal-people-worker-fears-1.3056535>

Inuk Soldier Wanted To Die After Decade of Racism, Sexual Harassment Broke Her

[Investigates](#), [National News](#) | May 2, 2015 by [Dennis Ward](#) |



Dennis Ward

APTN Investigates

After she phoned her sister, Cpl. Esther Wolki took a knife and began cutting into her arm.

A decade with the Canadian Forces, including a tour in Afghanistan, the racism, sexual and emotional harassment had finally broke her.

“I started cutting very slowly, inch by inch,” said Wolki, in an interview with APTN National News. “And then I did both wrists. But still, I wasn’t feeling anything. So I cut into my veins.”

Forty minutes passed before someone found her and it was only because she forgot to lock the door of the room she was in at CFB Shilo.

She would spend the next three weeks at a psychiatric hospital in Brandon, Man.

It was Nov. 15, 2014.

On Thursday, Gen. Tom Lawson, the commanding officer of Canada’s armed forces acknowledged a problem with sexual misconduct in the military and he promised action. The military released a report from an internal review which found there was a “culture of misogyny” in the ranks.

But for Wolki, it’s too late. She can’t wait for her military career to come to an end. An Inuk woman from a small community in the Northwest Territories, Wolki joined the military shortly after graduating from high school.



Now Wolki’s days at the CFB Shilo begin by counting out the handful of pills she needs to get her through the day. She needs them to keep her alive and prevent another suicide attempt.

“I’ve been scorned, scorned so hard from the military that I don’t think I deserve to live and I think suicide is the right for me to do because I think it’s the only peace I will get,” she said.

Her military career wasn’t supposed to be this way.

“It was pretty awesome at the start,” said Wolki.

Wolki’s story begins in the small Arctic community of Paulatuk which sits perched on the northern-most tip of the Northwest Territories. Here is where she spent her childhood, a happy-go-lucky time dreaming of seeing the world. That was part of the desire that drew her to the Canadian Forces, but there was also a practical motivation.

“I wanted to join so I could see different places and get out of Paulatuk, but mainly to make money for my family,” she said.

Wolki ended up at CFB Shilo, which sits about two hours west of Winnipeg. It is one of the largest military bases in Canada. It is also where Wolki experienced the darkest moments of her life.

“It started pretty much the first week I got there. There was other Native men there, Indians. And everybody presumed they were all my cousins and they’d ask me “You, this is your cousin, right? You guys are dating, right? Isn’t that would you guys do down in Northwest Territories,”” said Wolki.

She still remembers the words of one soldier.

“I was sitting there and he was like, ‘You know these people eat raw meat and piss in a bucket and wash their face with their piss because it’s warm,’” said Wolki. “He said, ‘Just quit and go back home and be a drunk like the rest of the Eskimos.’”

Wolki said the comments made her feel ashamed.

“They made me feel ashamed to be Inuit and from the North,” she said.

Some of the worst comments came from superior officers, said Wolki.

“You guys are the scum of Canada because you take welfare and you take up the government’s money. You don’t work for it. When you get your money, all you do is drink it up and you guys are drunks,” Wolki remembers one senior officer saying.

By the time she was packing her gear to deploy for Afghanistan, Wolki said she’d been called a drunken Eskimo and a dirty Indian.

Still, she soldiered on.

Wolki was stationed at a forward operating base on the front lines in one of Afghanistan’s most violent regions.

“A lot of people got hurt and passed away while I was on tour. And it was really sad to see the soldier’s carried away in their caskets. And their buddies holding up the casket,” she said.

Like many other soldiers, Wolki returned from Afghanistan disturbed and depressed by what she witnessed.



“The nightmares I’d have were...I’d be in my combat clothes but in the house. And I’d be getting dragged down, downstairs into the basement by Taliban. And it was like that every other night,” she said. “I’d dream about being in Afghanistan and being shot up. And seeing my friends all lying down. Seeing my family members getting blown up. I remember trying to save some people and I was carrying a kid and there had been an explosion and everybody was dead. And I’d wake up screaming.”

Wolki said she feels her requests to be tested for post-traumatic stress disorder and other possible health problems were ignored.

Former veteran’s ombudsman Ret.-Col. Pat Stogran said many soldiers like Wolki are let down by the system.

“There are far too many cases of not only people in similar situations to this young lady but also people who have gone one step further out of despair and killed themselves,” said Stogran, who was 31 years in the military.

But things were about to get worse for Wolkie. She would face one of the darkest moments of her life in November 2014.

She was at a local watering hole in Brandon having casual drinks on a casual night when agreed to go to a house party in the city’s south-end with some male soldiers.

Things took a nefarious turn.

“There was one guy who was sober and I thought he was OK and I asked if he could watch over me. And he took me to the washroom and pushed me down on the bathroom and he pulled down his pants and he said just do it,” she said.

“And I was thinking it’s probably better than being raped because an hour before the guy I went to see, he was...I was kissing him in the washroom and he kept trying to turn me around and pull off my pants and I kept saying no.”

Wolki was desperate to get out of the situation.

The police report tells the rest. It said Wolki locked herself in the attic and shouted for help out the window, prompting neighbours to call 911. Neighbours said they heard a woman screaming saying she was being held against her will.

Brandon police initially took three males into custody that night, but later released them because the officers felt Wolki’s claims were “unfounded.”

Wolki says the Brandon police officers who dealt with the case treated everything like a joke, even warning her to stay out of attics.

Back at the base, her superiors weren’t laughing and they also had little interest in her side of the story.

One senior officer blamed her for embarrassing the soldiers.

“He’s like you got these soldiers in shit and you probably ruined their night and that’s all he was saying to me you made the regiment a disgrace, you’re a disgrace to the regiment. This was all... that’s what he was saying to me,” she said. “They thought that everything was my fault and that I ruined the guy’s lives and I ruined their night for them and likely ruined their job. That’s when they started yelling at me saying I was a disgrace to the military.”

She wasn’t offered an ounce of compassion.



“They didn’t even ask if I was OK or hurt, they just wanted me charged,” said Wolki.

A week later, she decided to kill herself in Shilo, the place that caused her so much anguish.

She placed one last call to her sister Celina in Paulatuk.

“I answered the phone and she sounded really different. She said I’m, I don’t want to leave anymore. I don’t want to deal with them anymore,” said Celina Wolki.

Then, the phone went dead and the sister panicked, she feared the worst was about to happen. And it almost did.

Back at the base, Esther Wolki grabbed a knife to cut.

Wolki still struggles to stay alive. The nightmares continue.

Stogran said the military has a serious problem dealing with mental health issues. He said the matter should not be treated as a political scandal because this is about real lives on the edge.

“Even if this young lady has the wrong perception of the way she was treated, the fact of the matter is that’s her reality. And it’s going to cause a huge problem in her life. And a problem, if the government doesn’t pick up the expense, is going to land in her family and in the community. These problems don’t go away,” he said.

Hope, however, glimmers on the horizon for Wolki. She expects her to be finally released from the military.

She is going home, back to Paulatuk, the only place where Wolki believes she can still find peace.

“I miss the landscape. I miss the people. A lot of kids look up to me. I’ll be able to make a lot of changes when I get back home,” she said.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/02/inuk-soldier-wanted-die-decade-racism-sexual-harassment-broke/>

Winnipeg police fatal shooting of Aboriginal man nearly 7 years ago has family still waiting for answers

[National News](#) | May 4, 2015 by [Kenneth Jackson](#)



Kenneth Jackson

APTN National News

Nearly seven years ago an Aboriginal man was shot dead by Winnipeg police on the front lawn of his home.

And to this day the family of Craig McDougall, from Wasagamack First Nation, have been trying to find out what happened.

All they know is that their son is dead and the officers involved were cleared.

Police shootings in Manitoba are subject to an automatic inquest but in the case of McDougall, 26, the province of Manitoba didn't call one until last August.

"The question is why on earth would it take seven years?" said the family's lawyer Corey Shefman. "It's a little bit crazy and it makes the rest of the inquest that much less influential, because, of course, witness seven years down the road are not going to remember something other than what's in their notes."

After McDougall was killed the case was reviewed by up to three "outside" agencies, said Shefman.

"It first went to an outside police force, it then went to an outside Crown attorney (outside of Manitoba), then we believe it went to another outside police force for a follow-up investigation," said Shefman. "But we're not entirely sure because those reports haven't been released to us and that is one of things we're going to be asking for."

Still, he said those investigations shouldn't have taken so many years.

A date for the inquest hasn't been set but Shefman expects the earliest it can happen is November.

McDougall's family came to a routine hearing in February despite knowing they weren't going to learn anything.

Shefman said they are desperate for answers and waiting for “justice.”

They want to know what happened in the early morning hours of Aug. 2, 2008.

Police said they were responding to 788 Simcoe St. on a disturbance call. They said at the time that McDougall had a knife when they shot him. APTN has confirmed McDougall was found with a kitchen knife. But it’s unknown how he got it.

Bob Norton is a former inspector with the RCMP and was hired as a private investigator to look into the shooting several years ago. The following narrative is based on portions of his report.

McDougall lived at 788 Simcoe St. with his dad Brian McDougall.

Brian returned home from a local bar at about 2:30 a.m.

People were having a few beers and about 45 minutes later an argument breaks out forcing Brian to tell everyone to leave.

He also tells Craig to leave and not come home until he’s sober.

Craig is then seen in the lane behind the residence upset and arguing with people. One witness recalled Craig saying he wanted to kill himself.

Shortly after three females leave the back lane and Craig follows them onto Notre Dame Avenue. They allege he assaults them, pulling one of the females to the ground. Witnesses said he was yelling and screaming but didn’t know why.

The girls flag down a truck and the driver calls 911.

Craig returns home, shirtless, talking on his cellphone.

He was calling his girlfriend.

The three females tell police Craig assaulted them and give officers his home address.

While on the phone with his girlfriend police then show up at the house at about 5 a.m. and the girlfriend hears a female officer say “drop the knife”. Then she hears a male officer yell “drop the damn knife”.

She then hears four gunshots followed by a voice saying “man down, man down.”

Craig’s brother Johnny McDougall is at the house too and remembered seeing six officers outside and recalled hearing an officer say “He’s got a weapon. Put that knife down.”

Johnny saw two officers with their guns drawn.

It's dark out with the scene lit only by a street light across the street.

He said Craig took a few steps towards police then they started shooting and he fell on his back. He said police were on the sidewalk and Craig was in the yard. Between them was a four-foot fence.

Police then handcuffed Brian, who was trying to get to his son. They also handcuff Johnny and a woman.

An ambulance doesn't arrive within the 20 minutes following the shots and until police took Brian, Johnny and the woman away for questioning.

A total of five witnesses told Norton they never saw Craig with a knife in the period leading up to the shooting.

It's not known where Craig would have gotten the knife because he never entered the house and it was too big to fit in a pocket.

The family have told Shefman they don't trust police and want the relationship between Aboriginal people and the Winnipeg police to be part of the inquest's mandate.

But Shefman said Winnipeg police have objected.

"I don't think you can look at the death of a young First Nation man by police without exploring the larger issue of the relationship between police and Aboriginal people," he said. "Craig McDougall's father has said to us they don't trust police."

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/04/winnipeg-police-fatal-shooting-aboriginal-man-nearly-7-years-ago-family-still-waiting-answers/>

First Nations inquests in Ont. Move ahead with volunteer jurors

Romeo Wesley inquest first of several to proceed this year, regional coroner says

By Jody Porter, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 05, 2015 9:00 AM ET Last Updated: May 05, 2015 10:05 AM ET



First Nations volunteers may be part of the five person jury at the Romeo Wesley inquest in Sioux Lookout next month. (Mitchel Wiles/CBC)

History will be made in Ontario when the inquest into the death of Romeo Wesley in Cat Lake begins next month in Sioux Lookout.

It'll be the first time the province has selected a jury for a coroner's inquest from a list that includes First Nations volunteers.

That list is needed after Ontario's usual way of compiling its jury pool was found to discriminate against First Nations people living on reserve. The problem has stalled criminal cases and inquests involving Aboriginal people in northern Ontario since 2008.

"I really see an inquest as a pursuit of fairness or of justice for individuals and communities and this has been denied or delayed for far too long," said Dr. Michael Wilson, the regional supervising coroner for the north region. "So, I'm extremely gratified to see this now going forward."

The inquest into Wesley's 2010 death, while in police custody at the Cat Lake Nursing Station, is one of 20 cases delayed by Ontario's jury roll problem. That inquest is scheduled for June 8.



Regional Coroner Dr. Michael Wilson says I “huge relief” for inquests into the deaths of First Nations people to be moving forward. (parotary.com)

The [inquest into the deaths of seven First Nations youth who died while attending school in Thunder Bay](#) is expected to proceed this fall, along with two other inquests involving Aboriginal people in the region, Wilson said.

“I can tell you that it is a huge relief for me to be able see this go forward,” he said.

The use of volunteer jurors is made possible through a revision to the Ontario Coroner’s Act. It applies only to the Kenora and Thunder Bay districts, and affects only the jury selection for inquests, not criminal trials. The new legislation stipulates that selection for an inquest jury must be made before December 31, 2016.

A special provincial committee has been set up to go to First Nations in northern Ontario to collect names of people willing to volunteer for jury duty for inquests into the deaths of First Nations people. More than 300 people signed up.

That list will be combined with the regular jury roll which uses the municipal enumeration list to randomly select names. The number of First Nations volunteers included in the combined pool will be proportional to the First Nations population in the region, Wilson said.

From that combined pool, 70 to 100 prospective jurors will be randomly selected and interviewed to screen out people with bias or a relationship with the deceased, he said.

The process does not guarantee that the group of five people eventually selected as the inquest jurors will include a First Nations person.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/thunder-bay/first-nations-inquests-in-ont-move-ahead-with-volunteer-jurors-1.3060813>

Men supporting men: the answer to recent violence?

“When we sit together, we understand what the other one is going through”

SARAH ROGERS, May 06, 2015 – 11:00 am



Members of Unaaq men's association lead a number of training workshops for young men in Inukjuak, like this igloo-building workshop. (PHOTO COURTESY OF UNAAQ)

A recent rash of armed confrontations with police in Nunavut and Nunavik have underscored a pressing need for programs to better support troubled Inuit men.

Since the end of March, police in both regions have responded to at least five incidents involving violent, armed men, most of whom barricaded themselves inside a home.

The most recent included [two lengthy standoffs](#) in Iqaluit, [one that spanned three days](#) and shut down an entire neighbourhood.

The incidents seem to indicate a troubling trend of distraught young men, struggling with unresolved, or ongoing, personal issues.

That's no surprise, says Piita Irniq, a former Nunavut politician, commissioner and advocate for Inuit culture as a tool to help Inuit heal from colonial-era trauma.

“We've gone from igloos to microwaves in less than 50 years,” Irniq said.

“These incidents we see... it’s happening among young men much more than young women,” he said. “And what we need to do is reach out to these men.

“It’s more and more important for the governments in these regions to help these Inuit men get in touch with their cultural identity.”

In his work with communities across the Inuit Nunangat, Irniq uses traditional culture to help Inuit reclaim their sense of identity, something he believes helps to ground people. That in turn helps to build self-esteem, he says, something necessary for the healing process.

“If you have a past, then you have a future,” Irniq said.

When Irniq goes into a community or a southern prison to work with Inuit groups, he tries to impart what he calls “traditional tools,” skills that can help men contribute to their families, their local community.

“I’d like to see men making small qamutiit for babies and children to be pulled in, so we can take back the respect men always had in the community,” he says, as an example.

But to coordinate those activities and offer support to men in need, communities need to have organized leadership and facilitators in the form of local associations or committees, Irniq said.

And there are success stories in the North to build on. Since the mid-2000s, the Unaaq men’s association in Inukjuak has grown a reputation for strong community leadership and support, a model to which many other communities in the region look for inspiration.

“We got started for the same reasons we still see now — men committing suicide, dealing with addictions, violence and traumas,” said Tommy Palliser, one of Unaaq’s founding members. “But we’ve had a lot of impact.”

The group does that by coordinating workshops lead by elders, discussion forums and traditional skills training.

Unaaq is an open group but its services tend to target young men between the ages of 15 and 35.

“Most of the incidents we see are young men of that age,” Palliser said. “Unfortunately, a lot are on welfare, they have limited education and they just don’t have anything to do.”

Inukjuak, a community of 1,500 on Nunavik’s Hudson coast, has faced a number of dramatic and tragic losses in recent years involving young men.

Just last month, [a local man was shot dead by police](#) after he tried to enter the local Kativik Regional Police Force station with a knife in the middle of the night.

In March, [a 24-year-old armed man held family members hostage for two days](#) before turning the gun on himself.

These are “delicate” situations to respond to, Palliser said, and Unaaq always makes an effort to reach out to men and families in difficulty.

But the group’s purpose is more preventative, he points out.

“Our main goal is to keep these guys busy and out of trouble,” he said.

As a long-term goal, Unaaq would like to help bring more technical training opportunities to the community, Palliser said, in order to help men secure jobs — meaningful and permanent work of which they can be proud.

“We see lots of these guys working as janitors and driving water trucks, but it can be boring and repetitive,” he said. “A lot of men wish they had an education, but getting a high school diploma can be a challenge in itself.”

Palliser also thinks Unaaq would benefit from collaborating with other men’s groups across the North, much the way Pauktutit Inuit Women of Canada acts as an umbrella organization for regional Inuit women’s groups.

Inuit men would also have common experiences with other Aboriginal groups in Canada, he added.

On the other side of Hudson Bay, in Rankin Inlet, Noel Kaludjak helps coordinate a men’s support network in the Kivalliq region called Angutiit Makgiangninga, which translates as Men Rising Up.

“It means we’re getting up from abuse, anger, alcohol — all the pain from our hearts,” explained Kaludjak, who adds that he’s been on his own healing journey for about a decade now.

“The door is open to anyone,” he said. “When we sit together, we understand what the other one is going through. When there’s a woman present, it’s harder to speak up about our feelings.”

The network is informal, but hopes to eventually establish core groups in each community, Kaludjak said.

Since Angutiit Makgiangninga launched in 2009, Kaludjak estimates the group has offered support to anywhere from 20 to 30 men in each of the Kivalliq’s seven communities.

“When violent incidents like [the recent standoffs] happen, the person is probably not coming from a secure place,” he said. “Unstable families create unstable children.

“We’re trying to create better men who can connect with their spouses and raise solid children.”

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674men_supporting_men_the_answer_to_recent_violence/

MLAs grill justice staff on corrections at Nunavut legislative hearing

Auditor General says follow up report “very high” on list of future audits

THOMAS ROHNER, May 06, 2015 – 1:45 pm



Canada’s auditor general, Michael Ferguson (left), and assistant auditor general, Jerome Berthelette, listen as representatives from Nunavut’s Department of Justice answer questions from MLAs May 5 at the Nunavut legislature in Iqaluit. (PHOTO BY THOMAS ROHNER)

Canada’s auditor general told Nunavut MLAs May 5 that longstanding problems with the territory’s correctional facilities are thwarting the justice department’s efforts to deal with them.

And recent attempts made by justice department staff to address issues in Nunavut’s notorious jails have only slowed the growth of those problems, not reversed it.

Michael Ferguson is appearing before MLAs at Nunavut’s legislative assembly in Iqaluit this week to answer questions about a [highly critical report](#) his office issued March 10 on the state of Nunavut’s jails.

“The report struck me as a compelling analysis of a longstanding problem,” Ferguson said May 5.

Iqaluit-Niaqunnguut MLA Pat Angnakak asked Ferguson if he believes the audit will bring about the necessary changes.

Ferguson, who said he was equally as struck by the dedication of the justice department's staff, replied that governmental departments often lose sight of the bigger picture because they get bogged down in the day-to-day of their jobs.

"Good cooperation from a department [during an audit], means a department knows the auditor general is a resource that can help them see the forest instead of the trees," Ferguson said.

"Will your office be coming back to check on progress?" Angnakak asked.

Ferguson replied that his office normally does follow-up audits, however nothing had been scheduled yet.

"But the issues identified [in this report] I think are significant," and a follow-up audit on the state of Nunavut's jails would likely be "very high" on the list of possible future audits, Ferguson said.

Ferguson's report, tabled in the assembly on March 10, found the Government of Nunavut failed in key responsibilities under the Nunavut Corrections Act.

The report referred to many well-known and recurring problems in Nunavut's jails, including:

- chronic overcrowding at Iqaluit's Baffin Correctional Centre leading to [higher incidents of assault](#) within the jail;
- structural deficiencies at the BCC putting inmates and staff in danger; staffing and case management issues at both the [BCC and the Rankin Inlet jail](#); and
- the [lack of proper oversight](#) when placing inmates in segregation.

The report made around 20 recommendations, all of which the justice department agreed to implement and begin working on before the report was even released.

Representatives from Nunavut's justice department were also on hand May 5 to answer questions from MLAs.

"Under my leadership... responding to those recommendations will be a priority," said Elizabeth Sanderson, deputy minister of justice.

Sanderson said the department has already begun modernizing legislation and regulations relating to Nunavut's jails as well as ensuring Inuit societal values are "reflected" in current laws and policies.

But moving forward is not entirely in the hands of the justice department and will require help from MLAs, along with the departments of finance and community and government services, Sanderson said.

Some MLAs took Sanderson to task, asking what she meant by ensuring laws and policies reflect Inuit societal values.

Sanderson explained that the Nunavut Corrections Act, grandfathered from the Northwest Territories in 1998, will be made Nunavut-specific after consultation with elders.

Joe Enook, MLA for Tununiq, said Inuit societal values are not adequately implemented throughout the government.

“Are they currently implemented in the justice department?” he asked.

Sanderson said it was the department’s “ongoing and daily intention” to reflect Inuit societal values not only in how the department treats inmates but also its own staff.

Isaac Shooyook, the elder MLA from the Quttiktuq riding, pointed out that Inuit societal values include acknowledging the trauma and pain many criminals have suffered which can lead to acting out and breaking the law.

One-on-one counselling with elders for inmates is therefore crucial, Shooyook said, and he asked Sanderson if it was possible to allocate more funding towards such initiatives.

“Cost is not a concern” for one-on-one counselling with elders, Sanderson replied, adding that service is available to every inmate at the BCC who requests it.

Shooyook also asked Sanderson about a reference in her opening comments about the justice department’s goal of “one day” housing all Nunavummiut inmates — including those serving federal time in southern institutions — in Nunavut.

Shooyook asked if that included building a federal facility in Iqaluit for inmates who receive a sentence of two more years of incarceration.

“If it was up to me, it would happen like that,” Sanderson said, snapping her fingers. But that requires discussions with federal officials and a substantial investment by the Government of Nunavut, she added.

Enook also asked Sanderson for clarification on her reference to “one day.”

“I don’t want to get into a debate, but I need some clarification: what does ‘one day’ mean?” Enook said.

“I can’t identify that date today because a lot of the decision-making is outside of my hands,” Sanderson replied.

But the department did put a date on one of the recommendations made by the auditor general: the need for 70 new jail beds in Nunavut by 2026.

Chris Stewart, manager of major projects with the justice department, told MLAs that a business case for creating extra beds is nearly complete and is scheduled to be tabled in the Legislative Assembly when MLAs begin their fall session in November.

The legislative hearing on the auditor general's report is expected to continue until May 7.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674mlas_grill_justice_staff_at_legislative_hearing_on_corrections/

Aboriginal Education & Youth

John Ivison: Former Prime Minister Paul Martin right to be angry over aboriginal education funding

[John Ivison](#) | April 30, 2015 8:46 AM ET



File: Stuart Gradon/Calgary HeraldFormer Prime Minister Paul Martin expressed disappointment at the federal government's \$200 million allocated for aboriginal education.

The allocation in the federal budget of \$200 million to improve aboriginal education has enraged Canada's 21st prime minister.

"I don't understand why this government makes it such a partisan issue as they did in this budget. I believe discrimination in education funding will be an (election) issue for Canadians," Paul Martin said in an interview.

Perry Bellegarde, the National Chief of the Assembly of First Nations, called the money in the budget an “outright snub and a missed opportunity.” The two men were speaking prior to a Canada 2020 symposium on aboriginal people and economic development in Ottawa on Wednesday.

Martin has devoted much of his time in the years since leaving the Prime Minister’s Office to raising education levels among the country’s First Nations children, the fastest growing segment of the population.

His experience with his own Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative has convinced him that, with the right investment, First Nations kids can meet national standards.

“If we give them the same tools as other Canadians, the results will be drastic, as they were in these programs,” he said. “What we wanted to do was demonstrate that you could reform the system in terms of literacy.”

If we give them the same tools as other Canadians, the results will be drastic...

Martin is a partisan and, as with all partisans, he is quick to denigrate the views of his political opponents. He can’t help himself harking back to the Kelowna Accord, a \$5-billion funding arrangement his government negotiated with the provinces and aboriginal groups that the Conservatives quickly scrapped. “I hate to keep going back to Kelowna ...,” he said, more than once.

But when the former prime minister speaks about aboriginal education, he has justifiable grounds for anger.

It is, he believes, the single biggest moral and social issue we have as a country.

The \$200 million promised in the budget — spread over five years — is hardly likely to shore up a failing system, where spending is 30-50% less per capita than in provincial schools.

Funding increases have been capped at 2% for 19 years, despite a population that is growing four times faster than that of non-aboriginals.

The results in education terms are well known and hardly surprising — only one in three First Nations students on reserve complete high school. The wider social implications are linked — 23% of prison admissions, despite making up just 4% of the population, and a suicide rate that is twice that of non-aboriginals.

The Conservatives recognized something needed to be done and in their First Nations Control of First Nation Education Act (Bill C-33) promised a more realistic increase to core funding of \$1.25 billion over two years, with an annual growth rate of 4.5% thereafter.

Unfortunately, powerful forces within the native leadership pulled the rug from under Assembly of First Nations National Chief Shawn Atleo, claiming that the act's title was a misnomer and control would continue to reside in Ottawa.

The immediate consequence was that Atleo resigned, while the legislation and the money remain parked.



Shawn Atleo resigned after meeting stiff resistance to a proposed First Nations education bill.

Bernard Valcourt, the aboriginal affairs minister, has said he is prepared to work with willing partners and take a regional approach. Officials suggest there are prospects for smaller deals in Alberta, Manitoba and Ontario. But the chances of resurrecting a grand “Marshall Plan” for First Nations education this side of an election are slim.

The government's point of view is that the AFN wants money with no strings attached — “while it's not clear they can deliver,” in the words of one person with knowledge of the file.

Bellegarde said the process around Bill C-33 was “flawed.”

“Stephen Harper signed a deal with Shawn Atleo but no one knew about it. When people heard about it, they said ‘we can't accept that’. You've got to include everyone and in this instance, that process was not adequately followed.”

The new AFN leader says he has a mandate from his executive to establish a national fiscal framework around education. He said he is meeting with the minister soon, but “it is up to Bernie Valcourt to show some political will.”

The political logjam is a tragedy — doubly so because Martin's Aboriginal Education Initiative has displayed that, with comparable funding and cultural-specific programs, native children can perform as well, if not better than non-natives.

The Model School Project in two First Nation elementary schools attempted to bring literacy levels up to provincial average by Grade 3, using techniques pioneered in Ontario

problem schools a decade ago. In the year before the project began, only 13% achieved provincial standards for reading and only 33% for writing.

By 2014, 70% of the students met reading standards and 90% met the writing benchmark.

Martin says the costs of the pilot were comparable per capita to provincial schools. “To turn around 150 years of history is going to cost. But if we don’t turn it around, the cost will be substantially greater,” he said.

Another project — the Aboriginal Youth Entrepreneurship program — offers school credits for students in Grades 11 and 12 who sign up for financial literacy, accounting and marketing courses. The project, initiated in 2007, is now offered in 46 schools and includes use of specially created textbooks, written within the context of traditional aboriginal values.

Martin is outraged at the government’s under-funding but he is encouraged by the potential for progress. “There are now over 500 students who have benefited and learned to read and write to provincial averages by Grade 3. That’s the optimistic aspect to this.”

National Post

Direct Link: <http://news.nationalpost.com/full-comment/john-ivison-former-prime-minister-paul-martin-right-to-be-angry-over-aboriginal-education-funding>

UPDATED: Sask. Child advocate criticizes Corrections in annual report

By [Mike McKinnon](#) Reporter Global News, April 30, 2015 12:35 pm



Saskatchewan’s child advocate investigated 23 child deaths in 2014 compared to 26 deaths in 2013.

REGINA – The latest report from Saskatchewan’s Advocate for Children and Youth is critical of a provincial plan he believes isn’t being followed.

Bob Pringle says the government's Child and Family Agenda – which aims to guarantee youth “become a high priority in the province” – has not been properly implemented over the last five years.

“Far too often, we find that children's rights are not at the forefront of decision-making,” Pringle said. “Service providers are not working together to provide services to children and youth in a coordinated, holistic way.”

Pringle says that was made clear in the recent inquest [into the death of Lee Bonneau](#), who was in foster care in 2013 when he was [killed by another boy](#).

The advocate investigated 23 child deaths in 2014 compared to 26 deaths in 2013. Social services reported 41 critical injuries, 44 per cent of which were believed to be suicide attempts or self-harming injuries.

Corrections issues

Pringle once again railed against the government's transfer of young offenders from Saskatoon's Yarrow Youth Farm to the higher-security Kilburn Hall.

Yarrow was an open custody facility where inmates could leave for activities, but Pringle says the Ministry of Corrections didn't listen to concerns his office presented about programming and several locked doors at Kilburn.

“Telling us what you're going to do is not consulting with us,” Pringle said. “We used to be consulted. We didn't always agree, but we always felt we would at least have our view taken into consideration.”

A spokesperson for Corrections said Thursday that all programming needs for offenders are being met.

First Nations youth

The report also touches on issues for First Nations and Metis children, saying the group is “the most vulnerable in our society” and are over-represented in the child welfare and youth justice systems.

Pringle urges the federal government to reduce the number of Aboriginal children in care and create equal child welfare funding on reserves.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1971294/sask-child-advocate-criticizes-corrections-in-annual-report/>

8 First Nations across Canada getting funding to build new schools or renovate

The Canadian Press
April 30, 2015 08:19 PM

SASKATOON – Eight First Nations across the country have received federal funding for schools.

Federal Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt announced the projects Thursday at the Whitecap Dakota First Nation elementary school in Saskatchewan.

Valcourt said the projects — five new schools and six renovations — were chosen through a national system.

The aboriginal communities receiving funding for schools are Miawpukek in Newfoundland and Labrador; Long Point in Quebec; Little Red River Cree Nation in Alberta; Prophet River, Eske'temc, and Gwa'sala-Nakawaxda'xw in British Columbia, and Whitecap Dakota and Flying Dust in Saskatchewan.

Valcourt said he couldn't say how much all the projects would cost.

He said the funds are part the federal budget's commitment of \$500 million over seven years for a new Education Infrastructure Fund.

“This is important because we all talk about reforming our education system to ensure our kids, First Nation children, get a good education. Part of the mix is adding good school facilities,” Valcourt said.

The factors used to choose which communities got funding were “security of children, the health of the children, mostly these are the principal criteria that are being evaluated along also with the number of people that attend those schools,” he said.

See more at: <http://www.squamishchief.com/8-first-nations-across-canada-getting-funding-to-build-new-schools-or-renovate-1.1871291#sthash.NWs67Iju.dpuf>

Samson Cree celebrate milestones in education

By Elise Stolte, Edmonton Journal May 1, 2015



Marvin Yellowbird

EDMONTON – A gala event Friday to mark 25 years of local control over education for the Samson Cree Nation also celebrates a series of recent successes.

The First Nation predicts 16 graduates at their new outreach school this year, had 26 graduates from Grade 12 last year and enrolment is over 1,000 as more parents see options locally for their kids. The First Nations runs three schools covering kindergarten to Grade 12 on reserve.

“It’s changing in the right direction,” said Marvin Yellowbird, chair of the Nipisihkopahk Education Authority.

Based in Maskwacis, formerly known as Hobbema, the schools serve a challenging population that struggles with poverty, gang violence and the lasting impacts of residential schools. But their new Hub program is keeping more kids in school, said Supt. Kevin Wells.

Every Thursday morning, a representative from the school, RCMP, probation, housing authority, child welfare agency and others meet to solve challenges keeping specific children from class.

They take a comprehensive look at what’s happening in a family and create an action plan — sometimes cleaning a house, moving a family, getting better health care or enrolling a high school student in evening courses.

“We’ve closed over 100 cases,” Wells said. “Our mantra is meeting the needs of the kids. You’re going beyond a simple education institution.”

At the school, 60 per cent of the teachers are aboriginal, which is slowly helping to change attitudes in the community toward education and in the last two years hired coaches to help teachers teach math and literacy more effectively. “We’ve seen growth,” said Wells, hoping to see those results show up this year on the Grade 6 provincial exams.

However, the school still struggling with funding, said Wells. For years, the federal government has funded First Nations schools on reserve at much lower rates than equivalent provincial schools.

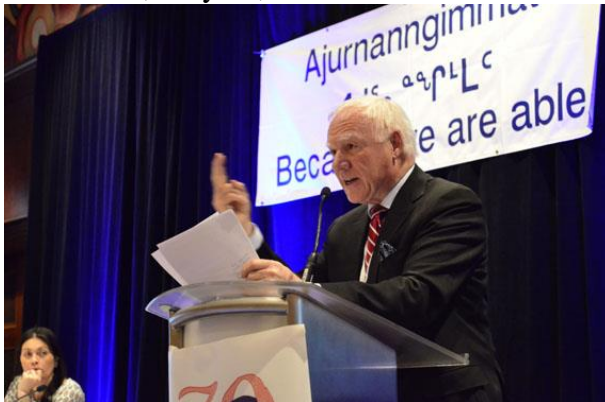
Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Samson+Cree+celebrate+milestones+education/11022119/story.html>

Get moving on a Nunavut university, speakers urge

“Nunavut is on the cusp of robust economic growth”

JIM BELL, May 04, 2015 – 8:00 am



James Nasso, the chair of the board of directors that oversees Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd., at the NS @30 conference in Gatineau, Que., this past April 28. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)



Mary Simon, the founding chair of the National Committee on Inuit Education said a university for Inuit Nunangat should have an Inuit identity but be operated with others through a form of co-management. (PHOTO BY JIM BELL)

OTTAWA — James Nasso, the chair of Agnico Eagle Mines Ltd. And a stalwart believer in building a bricks-and-mortar university for Nunavut, took his message to an audience of Inuit and Nunavut students and education leaders in Ottawa last week.

“It could be a great healing force,” Nasso said, saying he has seen first-hand the extent to which training and education can bring benefits to Inuit.

In April 2014, Nasso injected new energy into the debate over the creation of a Nunavut university when he announced at the 2014 Nunavut Mining Symposium in Iqaluit that [Agnico Eagle is prepared to donate \\$5 million](#) towards a brick-and-mortar Nunavut university.

A year later, Nasso is still evangelizing for the cause. Last week he took his message to NS @30, a three-day conference held at the Hilton Lac Leamy in Gatineau, Que., to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the founding of Nunavut Sivuniksavut.

He told his audience — made up of NS alumni, Inuit education leaders from across the Arctic and southern academics — that it’s “a scandal” that Canada stands out as the only circumpolar country without a university based in its Arctic.

And that makes the creation of a university in the Canadian Arctic even more urgent.

“Nunavut is on the cusp of robust economic growth but without a university, it will be hard to take advantage of it,” he said.

Mary Simon, the founding chair of the National Committee on Inuit Education, which in 2013 created the Amaujaq National Centre for Inuit Education, participated on a panel with Nasso, saying she agrees the need for a university is urgent.

And she said existing entities such as Nunavut Sivuniksavut and Nunavut Arctic College must start work now on figuring out how they’ll fit into an Arctic university.

She also said she envisions an institution with an Inuit identity that would serve all of Inuit Nunangat.

But at the same time, it would be open to non-Inuit students from outside the Arctic and exist as an example of Inuit and non-Inuit co-management.

“Inuit have always had a consensus-building culture,” Simon said.

Nasso said that, although he and his company have an obvious interest in helping prepare Inuit for resource development, he said it’s up to Nunavut to decide how to build a university.

“It’s the people of Nunavut who would do it, whatever they create. It would be an Inuit institution,” Nasso said.

Kelly Fraser, a Nunavut Sivuniksavut alumnus originally from Sanikiluaq, asked Simon and Nasso if a Nunavut university would offer a sub-standard curriculum.

She said it's well-known that Nunavut's kindergarten to Grade 12 system is "dumbed down."

"Will the curriculum in the university be dumbed down also?" she said.

Simon said no, and that standards at an Arctic university would be as high as those at any other institution of higher learning.

Direct Link:

http://www.nunatsiaqonline.ca/stories/article/65674get_moving_on_a_nunavut_university_speakers_urge/

U of S to offer indigenous language certificates

By Henrytye Glazebrook, The StarPhoenix May 6, 2015

The University of Saskatchewan will offer students the opportunity to earn certificates in indigenous languages for the first time in its history.

Representatives from the College of Arts & Science and the College of Education met on Wednesday to sign a memorandum of understanding, committing to the pursuit of enhancing First Nations, Métis and Inuit programs at the U of S.

Peter Stoicheff, dean of the College of Arts and Science, said the alliance will help create a more welcoming and informative community.

"I really believe that this memorandum of understanding is one way that we can move forward with this much larger goal of making our college, the college of education and the university the best place it can possibly be for aboriginal students," Stoicheff said.

Implementation will officially occur in September, when the College of Education will begin offering a ten-course program over a two-year period toward an indigenous language certificate. The College of Arts and Science is also in the process of developing its own certificate of proficiency in Cree language, which is being planned as either a five or 10-course program.

Lawrence Martz, vice-dean of the division of social sciences, noted language can serve as a bridge between different cultures.

“Language is an intrinsic part of culture. As part of our mission to celebrate and promote aboriginal cultures, it’s essential that we incorporate indigenous language into our curricular offerings,” Martz said.

“It’s important not just for creating a welcoming environment for indigenous people, but also they help all of us recognize the ways in which indigenous languages and cultures enrich our society.”

Though only Cree will be focused on at the outset, there are already plans to offer Michif and other languages at a future date.

Winona Wheeler, former head of the Department of Native Studies, offered a gift basket and blanket as a way of honouring the occasion.

“According to old-time tradition, when we are entering into alliances we are in fact making relatives,” Wheeler said. “And so on behalf of the Department of Native Studies and the College of Arts and Science, we welcome you to our family.”

Martz spoke optimistically about the future, referring to the deal as open-ended and evolving.

“It’s just the beginning, and I look forward to seeing the other things we can achieve by working together,” Martz said.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/life/offer+indigenous+language+certificates/11034892/story.html>

Aboriginal Health

Remote First Nations receiving substandard health care, says auditor general

[Ian Graham](#) / Thompson Citizen

April 30, 2015 09:37 AM

Mandatory training courses specified by Health Canada	Number and percentage of nurses who completed mandatory training courses		
	Manitoba (24 nurses)	Ontario (21 nurses)	Total (45 nurses)
Advanced Cardiac Life Support (ACLS)	8 (33%)	9 (43%)	17 (38%)
International Trauma Life Support (ITLS)	10 (42%)	2 (10%)	12 (27%)
Pediatric Advanced Life Support (PALS)	10 (42%)	6 (29%)	16 (36%)
Health Canada's Nursing Education Module on Controlled Substances in First Nations Health Facilities	19 (79%)	12 (57%)	31 (69%)
Immunization Competencies Education Modules	19 (79%)	18 (86%)	37 (82%)
Total Health Canada nurses who completed all five courses	1 (4%)	0 (0%)	1 (2%)

The federal auditor general's report on access to health services in remote First Nations of Manitoba and Ontario released this week found that the vast majority of nurses at Health Canada-run nursing stations had not completed all the department's required training. Photograph By Office of the Auditor General of Canada

The federal auditor general's report on access to health services in remote First Nations of Manitoba and Ontario released this week found that the vast majority of nurses at Health Canada-run nursing stations had not completed all the department's required training and that the stations themselves were not up to par with health and safety regulations and building codes.

The report also highlighted deficiencies in the registration of First Nations people in these communities that would entitle them to medical transportation benefits.

"Overall, we found that Health Canada nurses working in nursing stations were properly registered with their provincial regulatory bodies, but only 1 of the 45 nurses in our sample had completed all five of Health Canada's mandatory training courses that we selected for examination," says the report.

Of the 24 nurses in the sample who were working at Health Canada nursing station in Manitoba, 19 (79 per cent) had completed the department's nursing education module on controlled substances in First Nations health facilities, and the same number had completed education modules on immunization. Ten (42 per cent) had completed the International Trauma Life Support training course, the same number who had completed the Pediatric Advanced Life Support course. Only eight (33 per cent) had completed the Advanced Cardiac Life Support course. The one nurse in the auditor general report sample who had completed all the required courses was employed in Manitoba.

Health Canada said significant vacancy and turnover rates in nursing made it difficult to ensure mandatory training was completed and that the first priority was to ensure adequate staffing levels at nursing stations, though it would strengthen efforts to ensure mandatory training is completed.

Another problem the auditor general's report identified in the delivery of health care services at nursing stations in remote First Nations communities was nurses providing services that were outside the scope of practice defined by provincial legislation and regulatory bodies, such as the College of Registered Nurses in Manitoba. Health Canada

nurses provide some services beyond those nurses are authorized to perform, including prescribing and dispensing drugs, and performing chest and limb X-rays on patients over two years old.

The auditor general also inspected a sample of eight nursing stations built before 2009 in remote First Nations communities, three of which were in Manitoba. Health Canada requires such nursing station facilities to undergo an inspection every five years and, of the seven that had been inspected (two of them outside the required time period), there were a total of 30 deficiencies related to health and safety requirements or building codes identified, 26 of which had not been addressed. There was no documentation for the four deficiencies that Health Canada said had been addressed. Seven of the deficiencies were in nursing stations in Manitoba, two of which had not been inspected since 2004 and one that had never been inspected. Examples of deficiencies included fire alarm or emergency power systems that were not up to code, insufficient cooling and ventilations systems, unsafe stairs, ramps and doors, and poor accessibility for people with impaired mobility. Other issues included having no emergency backup generators, improper X-ray room door seals and defective locks. One residence used to house visiting nurses and health care providers had been unusable for two years because of a faulty septic system that causes cancellations of visits by health care workers.

The audit also found that not all eligible people were being registered in the Indian Registration System, which is used to determine eligibility for medical transportation benefits. Of 21 births in Manitoba in 2013 that were sampled, 10 were registered in the system by their parents and 11 were not.

“Health Canada has an objective of providing First Nations individuals living in remote communities with access to health services that is comparable to that provided to other provincial residents living in similar locations,” said auditor general Michael Ferguson in his opening remarks at an April 28 press conference on the release of his office’s seven spring 2015 reports. “We found that the department has not achieved this objective.”

NDP aboriginal affairs critic Niki Ashton, whose Churchill riding in Northern Manitoba includes several remote First Nations communities served by nursing stations, said the report revealed the Conservative government’s disregard for the health of First Nations people.

“Once again, we have another report showing how this Conservative government continues to fail Indigenous peoples in Canada,” said Ashton in an NDP press release. “It is completely unacceptable that this is how Canadian healthcare is being delivered in the 21st century.”

Manitoba Keewatinowi Okimakanak (MKO), a political advocacy organization that represents 30 First Nations communities in Northern Manitoba, said in a press release that the auditor general’s report confirms the findings of several previous reports to Health Canada over a number of years.

“The reports submitted by MKO depict a health care system for First Nations citizens of northern Manitoba with a lack of coordination and governance that yields a system that is out of balance, inefficient and delivers poor results for all stakeholders,” said the news release. “The system is expensive yet health outcomes are poor.”

“First Nations control and management of health care spending for physician services, nursing services, mental health services and medical transportation in the region is absent and contributes to limitations in achieving improved health access and outcomes.”

“It is time for the governments of Canada and Manitoba to support our First Nations to plan, design, manage, deliver and fund the delivery of First Nations health within the MKO region, in a manner acceptable to them.”

Health Canada operates 85 health facilities staffed by approximately 400 nurses as well as other health care providers, that serve about 95,000 First Nations people. The department says it spent about \$55 million in the 2013-14 fiscal year to support 21 nursing stations staffed by Health Canada nurses in Manitoba. Health Canada also spent \$112 million on medical transportation benefits in Manitoba over the same period.

See more at: <http://www.thompsoncitizen.net/news/nickel-belt/remote-first-nations-receiving-substandard-health-care-says-auditor-general-1.1869918#sthash.yhCQNH4V.dpuf>

Concerns raised over chronic wasting disease in Alberta

[Colette Derworiz, Calgary Herald](#) [More from Colette Derworiz, Calgary Herald](#)

Published on: May 2, 2015

Last Updated: May 2, 2015 11:29 AM MDT



Elk gather at dusk in Banff National Park.

Leah Hennel / Calgary Herald

First Nations and wildlife groups are asking provincial election candidates to make a commitment to address chronic wasting disease as it threatens wildlife across Alberta.

They issued a news release this week stating they've asked party leaders to provide a written commitment for an "immediate, complete and comprehensive assessment to address the crisis."

It includes the Alberta Fish and Game Association, Hunting for Tomorrow Foundation, Saskatchewan Wildlife Federation, Ermineskin Nation and Piikani Nation.

"This has been developing over many, many years," said spokesman Darrel Rowledge, who's with the Alliance for Public Wildlife. "It's just gotten more and more serious as the governments have mostly backed off.

"Yet the cause of this — the initiative to privatize and commercialize wildlife on game farms — has been promoted."

The concerns come two months after routine testing detected Alberta's first case of chronic wasting disease — a fatal nervous system disease that affects elk, moose and deer — in domestic elk in more than a decade.

It was discovered on a game farm at an undisclosed location in Alberta early in the year and confirmed in mid January.



An elk game farm near Edmonton in 2003.

Wayne Lowry, president of the Alberta Fish and Game Association, said they'd like to see a policy that reverses the domestication of wildlife.

“If you are going to solve a problem, you have to get at its roots,” he said. “If nothing is going to be done with game farming, then you are never going to get ahead of CWD.

“It’s so persistent there. The CWD in the wild populations originated in game farms, it was a spillover.”

The Herald emailed each campaign, but only received responses from the PCs and Green Party as well as the Alberta Party, which doesn’t have a position.

A spokesman with PC Alberta said they take all concerns about disease in Alberta’s livestock and wildlife very seriously.

“We have a strong chronic wasting disease monitoring and response program in place, which was developed in close consultation with stakeholders of all kinds,” wrote Mike Storeshaw. “The government also works very closely with the Canadian Food Inspection Agency, which leads investigations and management of any instances in which this disease is found.”

Janet Keeping, leader of the Green Party, said while they don’t have an adopted policy, they have a clear position.

“Two of the six main Green principles are ecological wisdom and sustainability,” she said in an email. “There is no doubt that we would be extremely skeptical of the value of continuing to permit, “the privatization, domestication, and commercialization of wildlife.””

“There has been research on the folly of this activity in Alberta for many decades.”

Liberal leader David Swann responded directly to Rowledge, committing to undertake a review if his party forms government.

“I am very conscious of the economic and environmental risks associated with the continued spread of CWD in Alberta,” he wrote, adding it would include an immediate moratorium on commercial movement of infected tissue and conducting a broad analysis of the issue.

Officials with the game farm industry, however, said they are one of the most heavily regulated agricultural industries in the province.

“First of all, there is no crisis with CWD,” said Connie Seutter, chairwoman of the Alberta Elk Commission. “Secondly, we do not farm wildlife. We farm domestic animals.

“Thirdly, the current legislation that is in place is ... more than able to track and trace everything that goes on on a game farm here in Alberta. We are the most regulated industry out there, amongst all agricultural groups.”

Seutter, who has a game farm with 500 elk, said there's no proof of any risk of the disease being contracted by humans from elk and it's still unknown how it transmits outside the fences of game farms into wildlife.

However, Rowledge said lab testing has now confirmed the disease can be taken up into, or deposited on to, plantlife — including agricultural crops — that have been shown to transmit the disease to susceptible animals.

The research has not yet been published.

Still, Rowledge said it presents a significant risk of further transfer of chronic wasting disease to wildlife and other species, which could potentially lead to trade restrictions that threaten agricultural markets and demand for the destruction of wildlife.

Direct Link: <http://calgaryherald.com/news/local-news/concerns-raised-over-chronic-wasting-disease-in-alberta>

Untrained nurses on remote First Nations means sub-standard care.

Published on May 02, 2015

Canada's auditor general has released a report that condemns poor health care provided to people on remote First Nation reserves as a result of a shortage of fully trained nurses.

Which is to say the undertrained nurses are also over worked.

So many things could go wrong in this situation, and perhaps they already have.

Because health care centers in those remote communities are under staffed, nurses who work there have not been able to attend ongoing training courses mandated by Health Canada and enforced by provincial regulatory bodies.

Those training courses were implemented out of the realization that nurses in remote FN communities may face emergency situations that require training beyond basic nursing education programs provide.

The mandatory training includes courses in immunization, cardiac life support, and the handling of controlled substances in FN health facilities, the report says.

That nurses in those communities haven't received the mandatory training is a problem both for the nurses and the patients whose lives they are expected to save in emergency situations that could mean life and death.

In a group of 45 nurses who were surveyed, only one had completed those mandatory training courses.

While the study was done in Ontario and Manitoba, the findings apply to many remote reserves across the country.

The audit report concluded that if this trend persists it could ‘negatively affect the health services provided to First Nations individuals.’

As if that’s no bad enough, a previous study had found that people of First Nation’s origin have negative experiences during hospital visits anywhere in the country.

So it would seem that if people travel from their remote reserves where they reside in search of better treatment options in urban centers, they are not guaranteed better diagnoses there either.

It’s a catch 22.

This is a huge problem – one that warrants immediate action without sparing any resources.

Forcing nurses to perform procedures that are out of their scope of training is a big let down for them.

The auditor general’s survey found that nurses in remote aboriginal communities were performing out of scope practices like prescribing and dispensing broad spectrum antibiotics, intravenous medications for cardiac arrest and seizures. They were also performing X-rays of the chest and limbs of patients over two years old.

Perhaps these are things they have a good grip on through experience on the job but why not give them an opportunity to better their skills through similar training that other nurses in urban centres have the time to attend? Are we saying the lives of Canadians in urban centres are more valuable than those of First Nations people living on remote reserves? One would certainly hope that’s not the case.

All Times-Herald Editorials are written by editorial staff.

Direct Link: <http://www.mjtimes.sk.ca/Opinion/Editorials/2015-05-02/article-4133542/Untrained-nurses-on-remote-First-Nations-means-sub-standard-care/1>

For aboriginal children, one set of rights can’t trump another

‘We can start a new history by upholding their rights as both children and as Aboriginal Peoples’

By Jocelyn Formsma, [for CBC News](#) Posted: May 04, 2015 9:03 PM ET Last Updated: May 04, 2015 9:03 PM ET



This young girl with leukemia who is being treated by the Hippocrates Health Institute prepares raw, organic vegetables that are part of the diet that the institute recommends. (CBC)

When it comes to children, Canadian society’s rightful reaction is to want to be protective of their best interests because they are a vulnerable segment of society.

When it comes to aboriginal children, Canadian society’s unfortunate reaction has represented a history of ruling against their best interests as both children and as Aboriginal Peoples.

A recent decision from a court case involving an aboriginal girl with cancer, whose family originally withdrew her from chemotherapy, might have changed some of that.

The girl, known in the media only as J.J. from Six Nations, gained public attention because her mother refused chemotherapy to treat acute lymphoblastic leukemia (ALL) in favour of pursuing traditional Haudenosaunee medicine.

A court in Brantford, Ont., decided that J.J.’s mother has an aboriginal right to choose to pursue traditional medicine for her daughter.

That decision was controversial because many incorrectly considered the choice as “aboriginal rights trumps children’s rights.”

‘This case makes it clear that there is no such thing as an aboriginal right trumping a child’s right.’ - *Jocelyn Formsma*

Decisions that involve aboriginal children, especially potentially life or death ones, are not easy to make.

Decision-makers need to consider all factors and applicable rights and give appropriate weight to each. All parties involved in this case made it clear that they wanted nothing but the best outcome for J.J.

This case makes it clear that there is no such thing as an aboriginal right trumping a child's right, when for an aboriginal child, they hold both aboriginal and children's rights.

J.J.'s right to access traditional medicine is the same as her right to life and her right to optimal well-being. As seemingly irreconcilable that may seem from an outsider's perspective, these three rights are fused for an indigenous person.

The decision was under threat of appeal for months, but in a rare and admirable move, all of the parties co-operated with each other to propose a clarification to the judge's decision.

The clarification did three things:

1. It demonstrated what positive outcomes are possible when seemingly opposed parties adjust their relationship for the best interests of and outcomes for a child.
2. It outlined that J.J. has an expanded medical team working with her that includes receiving traditional Haudenosaunee medicine and care alongside chemotherapy.
3. It clarified that the best interests of the child are paramount while affirming that aboriginal rights should be a part of a child's best interests and considerations.

Judge Edward Gethin, who made the original judgment, endorsed the clarification.

The significance of the case, both the original decision and the clarification, is that J.J. is recognized as a Haudenosaunee child with equal access to aboriginal rights like any aboriginal person and equal access to children's rights like any other child.

Her rights deserved to be equally considered and weighed and not compete against one another.

Canada's track record not good

Too often, decision-makers forget that children have a broad range of rights to be considered in any decision that is made about them and that children have the right to participate in decisions that affect them.

'Canadian history has shown through the residential schools, the '60s scoop and the contemporary child welfare system, that best interests of the child analyses have often been used against aboriginal children in favour of their removal.' - *Jocelyn Formsma*

Canadian history has shown through the residential schools, the '60s Scoop and the contemporary child welfare system that "best interests of the child" (BIOC) analyses have often been used against aboriginal children in favour of their removal.

There may be times when removal of the child is warranted, but not for as long and for the reasons we have come to know looking back on these histories.

Moving forward, any BIOC analysis for aboriginal children should first ask, “What does the child want?” The child should be at the centre of all BIOC analyses. Their right to participate should not be infringed without good reason.

If the child’s input cannot be ascertained, then there should be mention of the efforts made to ascertain the child’s input and the reasons why it could not be included.

All BIOC frameworks should include special considerations for indigenous children in accordance with their rights as outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (UN DRIP), the Convention on the Rights of the Child (CRC) and any other rights that an indigenous child has as a member of his or her community.

The relevant articles from the UN DRIP and CRC should be drawn upon based on the facts of the case. The decision-maker then should conduct a cross-comparison of affected right to see if there are any conflicting or competing rights. Any conflicting or competing rights should be balanced in relation to each other to prevent outright infringement.

While we rely on parents, service providers or courts to make decisions for children, it is important that these decisions adequately consider all the pertinent rights in equal weight to one another.

It is not in a child’s best interest for decision-makers to pick and choose which rights they think should be considered or given more weight than another right.

We can start a new history with aboriginal children by considering their best interests and understanding and upholding their rights as both children and as Aboriginal Peoples.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/for-aboriginal-children-one-set-of-rights-can-t-trump-another-1.3060848>

Aboriginal Health Centre needs bigger digs

Hamilton Spectator

By [Nicole O'Reilly](#)

May 05, 2015

The De dwa da dehs nye>s Aboriginal Health Centre is looking for new homes in Hamilton and Brantford after outgrowing its existing facilities.

The centre, which offers a mix of traditional healing and western medicine, officially launched its capital planning campaign at events in the two cities Tuesday.

Community members, centre employees and representatives from partner agencies gathered in prayer, song and dance and with a traditional lesson at Honouring the Circle on Rosedene Avenue in Hamilton in the afternoon.

Details of where the new health centres will be located and what they will look like are yet to be decided, but board chair Pat Mandy called the launch of the campaign — with the slogan “Building on our roots” — a major step forward.

The plans are a “new beginning” said the centre’s executive director, Constance McKnight. She described De dwa da dehs nye>s, which means “taking care of each other amongst ourselves,” as a place of community, refuge, learning, healing and sharing.

It’s a long path forward, said project leader Susan Conner, a consultant with PRISM Partners Inc. The key will be building a compelling case for funding to the Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care, she told the crowd, later adding that the price tag will be in the millions.

They are planning a community feedback session for late June and expect to submit a proposal to the ministry as early as the end of July, Conner said.

The centre services roughly 1,500 clients a year in everything from primary health care to spiritual healing and mental health and addiction services.

Hamilton’s site at 678 Main St. E. is an aged, three-level brick building with significant space and structural issues.

Architect Brian Porter of Two Row Architect told the crowd they will have to prove to the province that simply renovating the spaces is not an option.

“It’s like your favourite pair of blue jeans in high school that you just can’t fit into anymore,” he said.

Clinical services manager Angela Naveau says when she started with the centre about 11 years ago, they were operating out of a trailer at the site on King Street in Brantford.

In an interview, she said she’s excited to see how far they have come.

Naveau was part of a team from Aboriginal Health Centres across the province who visited a centre in Anchorage, Ala., about a year ago.

That centre, the Southcentral Foundation, is heavily client-driven, Naveau said, adding that this is the dream for the new facilities in Hamilton and Brantford.

Direct Link: <http://www.thespec.com/news-story/5603392-aboriginal-health-centre-needs-bigger-digs/>

First Nations Health Authority aims to improve access for B.C. aboriginal communities

by [Yolande Cole](#) on May 6th, 2015 at 2:00 PM



Before Grand Chief Doug Kelly embarked on a wellness challenge with other B.C. First Nations leaders in April 2013, he was “failing” his annual physical exams.

“[My] stress level was too high, blood pressure was too high—I was a heart attack waiting to happen three years ago,” the chair of the First Nations Health Council recounted in a phone interview.

“Today, as a result of making changes to my lifestyle, I eat healthy foods, I am physically active, I make sure that I get eight hours of sleep a night, and I take care of my spirit.”

That first annual health initiative, which was followed by a step-up challenge to track physical activity, is part of a broader emphasis on health promotion and disease prevention in aboriginal health care in B.C.

“With our leadership accepting our responsibility as role models and beginning to make those changes to our lifestyle, that will help our citizens realize that they have more

control over their own well-being than a physician or any other health professional,” said Kelly, who is also president of the Stó:lō Tribal Council.

The health council, formed in 2010, has been part of B.C.’s First Nations health governance structure since the First Nations Health Authority took over responsibility in October 2013 for programs and services that were formerly delivered by Health Canada.

The body is the first permanent provincial First Nations health authority in Canada. On May 6 and 7, more than 850 delegates from across B.C. are attending the seventh annual Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey conference in Vancouver, which focuses on health issues and solutions in First Nations communities.

Dr. Evan Adams, who has been the chief medical officer of the authority since December, said indigenous communities have signalled that they want their health-care system to incorporate a traditional, holistic approach.

“They don’t want to inherit a system that’s like the western system, which can be a little bit downstream-focused,” Adams said during an interview in his West Vancouver office.

“The western system spends most of its money on you in the last 10 years of your life... Rather than focusing on the last 10 years of life, we have very much a focus on the whole width and breadth of life, but particularly around health protection—making sure that people stay well as opposed to dealing with them when they’re really sick.”

According to Adams, First Nations people have historically been “high needs, low demand” when it comes to accessing the health-care system.

“So they need help, but they think the system’s not for them,” he said. “And our statistics show that we use the provincial health-care system at half the rate of other British Columbians.”

While health indicators among First Nations communities are improving, the aboriginal population still faces a gap in health outcomes compared to other British Columbians.

“Our goal is health outcomes and health services equal to or better than the province’s,” Adams said.

“And we’re not just asking: we really are demanding it. It’s not acceptable—it’s actually immoral—for one racial group to do well and the other not to do well living in the same place. And so we are trying to mitigate the circumstances that First Nations people find themselves in and give them the best possible chance.”

Some of the health authority’s initiatives include primary-care projects aimed at improving health-care access in First Nations communities—such as new teams of doctors, nurses, and mental-health clinicians—in addition to efforts like maternal-, child-, and family-health teams and mobile-support and complex-care teams.

“We’re reaching the hard-to-reach, which hasn’t always been the goal of the health system,” Adams said.

“The health system, to put it simply, before used to say, ‘Oh, we’ve set up a hospital; we’ve set up a clinic. If you want to come and visit us, that’s great,’ instead of doing really active outreach to those in the most need.”

Adams noted that the health authority’s work is being followed by the rest of the country—the organization has been contacted by other provinces and territories to see how it’s doing.

“Everybody’s watching very closely,” he said.

There are also “sky-high expectations” for the authority’s work, according to Kelly.

“But that doesn’t deter us—it actually motivates us,” he stated.

“We’re excited about doing our best to make those improvements to programs and services, to transform those programs that are not working,” Kelly added.

“So we’re going to do it in a way that’s consistent with our culture, our traditional medicines, our spiritual beliefs. We’re going to do it our way, but we are going to achieve significant change over the next 20 years.”

Direct Link: <https://www.straight.com/news/444436/first-nations-health-authority-aims-improve-access-bc-aboriginal-communities>

First Nations need to shape their own health care: Joe Gallagher

First Nations people are more at risk of heart disease, diabetes than the general population

By The Early Edition, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 06, 2015 2:52 PM PT Last Updated: May 06, 2015 2:52 PM PT



Delegates from First Nations in the Vancouver Coastal region attend the First Nations Health Authority's annual forum. (Leah George-Wilson/Twitter)

First Nations people face more health challenges than the general Canadian population, and the head of the First Nations Health Authority — which partners with regional health authorities to deliver health services to aboriginal people in B.C. — says they need to be a part of finding a solution.

“First Nations need to be involved in the designing and delivering of and determining what health services look like for them,” CEO Joe Gallagher told The Early Edition's Rick Cluff.

According to [Health Canada](#), if you are aboriginal, you are 1.5 times more likely to get heart disease, three to five times more likely to have Type 2 diabetes and eight to 10 times more likely to get tuberculosis.

While aboriginal people [make up 4.3 per cent of the overall Canadian population](#), they contract 15 per cent of new HIV and AIDS infections.

“Colonization created reserve systems. It created alienation from resources and lands and took away from the traditional lifestyle that we had,” said Gallagher.

“We haven't made the transition from the impact of colonization to where we need to be.”

Access to health care isn't universal

Gallagher said First Nations living on remote reserves often don't have access to the same health services other communities have — but often the same goes for people living in big urban centres.

“We find that a lot of our people are not connected to family physicians and a lot of people are transient,” he said.

“They're going back and forth [to their communities]. When that's happening their health records are not transferred with them.”

Working together to find a way forward

Today and tomorrow, representatives from more than 200 First Nations in British Columbia are meeting with provincial and federal government officials at the FNHA's annual forum — *Gathering Wisdom for a Shared Journey*.

"This year's conference is an exciting opportunity for us to roll up our sleeves and to get some work done," said Gallagher.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/first-nations-need-to-shape-their-own-health-care-joe-gallagher-1.3063658>

Aboriginal History

Artist, historian team up to preserve First Nations tales

Richard Watts / Times Colonist
May 1, 2015 06:00 AM



Orca Breech, from Orca Chief by Robert Budd and Roy Henry Vickers.

Artist Roy Henry Vickers is best known for his iconic imagery of aboriginal people. But ask him about his personal inspiration and he'll tell you it's stories.

"First Nations peoples, before the written word came, we learned by listening to stories and we learned by hearing songs, which are stories, and we learned by watching dances, which are stories acted out," said Vickers in a telephone interview.

"So, to me, it's not an accident that I am an artist," he said.

"It's a responsibility for me to use my artistic expression as a storyteller."

He and his longtime friend, Robert (Lucky) Budd, have just completed their third illustrated novel, *Orca Chief*, based on a legend told and retold and passed down. Budd and Vickers also teamed up to write *Raven Brings the Light* in 2013 and *Cloudwalker* in 2014.

Orca Chief is the story of a leader of the orca folk who told human beings of the ways of the sea, its tides and inhabitants, and the various kinds of salmon. It's also the first time it's ever appeared in print.

Vickers said it teaches all people about respecting the ocean and the creatures living in it.

Nobody has any real idea how old the story is although it's believed to have originated with the Kitkatla people of the Tsmishian First Nation. Vickers said he first learned it decades ago from an elderly member of his family.

But Vickers said when Budd first suggested he put the stories in a book, he was reluctant.

"These are not books, these are stories," he said. "I tell these stories, I don't write them down on a piece of paper."

Vickers said he even sat down at a computer or with a pen several times and tried to write them down but was unable to make the switch. Eventually, pressed by Budd, he came to believe putting the stories into books is likely the best way to see they are preserved and passed on. And Vickers said that is a responsibility all storytellers must acknowledge.

"We are responsible to the knowledge that is given to us," Vickers said. "That responsibility is to give that knowledge to others, so they might know."

His original problem, however, arose because he believes stories are meant for storytellers to recite, act out, sing and shout. They lose something precious and intimate in books.

For example, there's the immediate back story. Good storytellers will begin by recounting when and how they were first told the tale. They will even announce that "now" would be a good time to tell it again.

So Vickers said when he first heard the tale of the *Orca Chief* years ago, a small rupture was afoot in the community that he still won't name. People were upset over an attempt to claim a particular icon and make a profit from it.

"I was told, 'This is not the time to be telling the story because it would cause great strife but one day you'll be able to tell it,' " Vickers said.

"I didn't know what that day was but now I do," he said. "So now I can tell the story."

Also lost are the metaphors and imagery of the First Nations language with its layers of sensation and images from the natural world.

For example, Vickers said if he asked his aunty if she has seen his carving knife, she might reply with something that literally translates to, “There are so many leaves on the ground I can’t tell which is which.”

Or, if he asks her if she knows a particular person she has never met, she will answer in a way that translates as, “No, he is not in my heart.”

“The language is incredibly poetic,” said Vickers. “And if we know the land and we know the ocean, then we can know the language.”

Also lost in a book are the personas of the storytellers themselves. A good storyteller will sing, perhaps dance or shout and make expressions. Sometimes the songs will be in a language listeners don’t even know. But that’s OK.

“When you are singing, people are feeling you as well as hearing you,” said Vickers. “They might not be able to understand what you are saying but they sure can feel what you mean.”

He said, however, that by working together, he and Budd were able to translate Orca Chief into a modern book.

Budd, who has a background in history and has done work with CBC archives, said he considers his role with Vickers as less as a co-author and more of a producer.

He said First Nations storytellers often include pieces of narrative that arise almost separately from the main story. It’s just part of the way stories are told in the tradition. But including them can disrupt the narrative arc of an English book.

“A lot of the time there is tangential stuff that happens when you tell a story and it’s all lovely and good,” said Budd. “But it doesn’t really translate into a book.”

“Culturally, it comes from a different tradition than a lot of the stories people are used to,” he said. “Tangentially, things will just happen and you have to just accept them and move on.”

Certain elements of timing and narrative in Orca Chief might be out of place in standard English. But it’s all part of the original story and very special.

So Budd said he started breaking the Orca Chief story down into smaller pieces or moments. He would then ask Vickers if had any particular image in mind for this moment of the story to illustrate the book.

Piece by piece the story comes together in a way that is not the same as a personally recounted tale. But it ensures the images, lessons and tales can be passed along and appreciated.

“These stories have been told for thousands of years and with any kind of luck they will be told for thousands more,” said Budd. “We are just one link in that chain.”

Orca Chief is published by Harbour Publishing. Vickers and Budd will be in Victoria to speak about the book on Thursday at 7 p.m. at Legacy Art Gallery, 630 Yates St.

See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/artist-historian-team-up-to-preserve-first-nations-1.1871132#sthash.9ywW0BNj.dpuf>

After Idle No More, Canada will never be the same, historian says

By Charles Hamilton, The StarPhoenix May 3, 2015



Ken Coates, a University of Saskatchewan professor who wrote a book about Idle No More, says the movement is going to be of lasting significance. (LIAM RICHARDS/The StarPhoenix)

Most Canadians still don't understand it.

It began with four Saskatchewan women speaking out against a federal omnibus budget bill, and led to hundreds of protests across the country.

Idle No More was not just about taking to the streets, according to University of Saskatchewan historian Ken Coates. In his new book, *#IdleNoMore: And the Remaking of Canada*, Coates outlines why Idle No More was one of the most powerful demonstrations of aboriginal solidarity and identity ever to take place on Canadian soil. Canada, he says, will never be the same.

The StarPhoenix sat down Coates to find out why. This interview has been edited for length and clarity.

What ever happened to the Idle No More movement? Is it still relevant?

I think Idle No More is extremely relevant. I think it's a mistake to think that because the public face has changed that somehow the movement has disappeared ...

It was set up to convince aboriginal people across the country that they actually should take a very strong stand on the issues and concerns that are important to them. That they should stand up and they should speak up not about a particular set of things, not about a particular policy but about the issues facing aboriginal people generally. I view the whole process as one that was incredibly empowering. It was designed to be empowering and that's why I think it was one of the most transformative events in Canadian political history, and I don't think we've seen the last of it at all.

Did most non-indigenous Canadians simply miss the point? Did they just see it as another protest movement?

Oh very much. Partly because that is the way we understand things. We had trouble with Idle No More because when 400 people showed up in the Midtown Mall the first reaction was close the screens in front of the stores, but when you actually look and say, 'They came to dance' — they were drumming, singing and then 20 minutes later they left — you kind of say what is this?

Do you think the movement can have an impact on the large political issues facing aboriginal people in Canada?

I think what happened and what is happening already is that aboriginal people have discovered that they have this collective power, this identity that is so much stronger than the public at large thought was there. I think that has shaken people a fair bit.

How, as a non-aboriginal person, can you say for sure what lasting impact the movement will have?

First off, I am a historian and I think we will know the lasting impact of Idle No More in 20 years. Secondly, I watched it from the outside. I am not an insider in any way as an aboriginal person or as a participant in the event. I had the sense from the very first day that the public at large and governments generally missed the point. They were looking for something else. They were looking for Occupy, they were looking for American Indian Movement-style protest, the African-American style protest. You think about those hundreds of events, those thousands of people, no violence, no destruction of property. That in itself is unbelievable. Compare that to the G8 summit in Toronto. What an amazing accomplishment. This was a peaceful assertion of aboriginal identity and issues. It is going to be up to the insiders to tell you what Idle No More looked like from the inside. I have been watching aboriginal affairs for a long time. I didn't purport in the book or any of my work to say here is what aboriginal people think. But I can tell you ... I think you can say there is something going on here that the public at large hasn't noticed that is going to be of lasting significance.

Direct Link:

<http://www.thestarphoenix.com/news/After+Idle+More+Canada+will+never+same+historian+says/11025452/story.html>

Makeover for Battle of Seven Oaks site

Changes to reflect Métis win over Selkirk settlers in 1816

By: Bruce Owen

Posted: 05/5/2015 3:00 AM |



The monument doesn't tell the full story of the battle, which was a milestone in the history of Manitoba.
(BORIS MINKEVICH)

Construction begins this week on a corner lot on north Main Street to properly recognize a seminal event in Manitoba's history.

The Battle of Seven Oaks Monument National Historic Site – at Main and Rupertsland Avenue – will be an interpretive park, which is scheduled to be finished this summer.

An event marking the bicentennial of the battle is planned for June 19, 2016.

The new park is expected to cost \$350,000, with funding from the three levels of government, the Manitoba Metis Federation and the Winnipeg Foundation.

The official unveiling of the park will be held today at 11:30 a.m. at the site.

Seven Oaks monument committee chairman Gary Jackson said the project is the culmination of about eight years of work led by students at Governor Semple School and will be built around the original marker to the battle at the site.

‘This is the kids’ neighbourhood. This is the school named after one of the people who died there. The kids kind of wondered what happened to the other half of the story. The original monument only tells one part of it’

— Gary Jackson, chairman of the Seven Oaks monument committee, pointing out that missing from the monument is any mention of the Métis contribution

“This is the kids’ neighbourhood. This is the school named after one of the people who died there,” Jackson said Monday. “The kids kind of wondered what happened to the other half of the story. The original monument only tells one part of it.

“There’s the Selkirk settlers’ side, or the people who lost the battle. But then there’s the Métis side, and there’s nothing that says anything about that.”

Danielle Mesojednik, 17, began researching the battle when she was in Grade 4, and has been involved in planning the new monument.

“It’s always fascinated me how a small project that some kids did can be so revolutionary and how we can change an entire monument and change a story,” she said.

Parks Canada, which owns the site, has created six interpretive panels that tell the story of the battle. The site will be fully landscaped with new paths, lighting and benches.

Area MLA Justice Minister Gord Mackintosh, said the new park signifies what he called the amazing co-operation of people from different walks of life, including the Seven Oaks School Division and local historians and archivists.

The battle was the worst of several confrontations between the Hudson’s Bay Company and the North West Company, rival fur-trading companies in Western Canada, as they fought to control the lucrative trade in beaver, silver fox and otter pelts. It happened on June 19, 1816, on what was then called Frog Plain and is now known as West Kildonan.

A number of Métis men with the NWC, led by Cuthbert Grant, were en route to a meeting with other NWC traders to sell them a load of pemmican, the fur trader’s version of today’s high-protein energy bar, which is made with bison fat.

Under a recent decree, Grant and his men weren’t supposed to be dealing in pemmican. The valuable pemmican was ostensibly supposed to be saved for the new settlers, so riders with HBC headed out from Fort Douglas, near the Alexander Docks, north along the Red River towards where the Green Brier Inn is now located.

Leading them was Robert Semple, governor of the HBC.

Semple soon found out his side was outnumbered about three to one.

One of Semple's men – they were mostly Scottish and Irish – fired at the Métis.

The Métis fired back.

In the ways of the wild Canadian West, the Métis fell to the ground to reload. The HBC men thought they had wiped them out and raised their arms in a victory cheer. That's when the Métis stood up again and blasted the HBC men, killing 22 of them. Two Métis were killed. The gunfire lasted no more than 15 minutes.

Most of those killed were buried on the battlefield.

The British government called an inquiry into the deaths. It was headed by Lt.-Col. William Coltman. He found the first shot was fired by the HBC men.

Grant and a number of NWC employees were charged with murder and larceny in trials held at York in Upper Canada in October 1818. All were acquitted.

The two fur companies merged in 1821.

Historians consider the battle the first major event on the Prairies that established the Métis as their own people.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/makeover-for-battle-of-seven-oaks-site-302525211.html>

Aboriginal Identity & Representation

How do we stop misrepresenting First Nations culture? Just ask

Television shows and movies are the biggest culprits

By Don Marks, [for CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 29, 2015 7:19 PM CT Last Updated: Apr 29, 2015 7:28 PM CT



Many First Nation fans were not 'Happy' with artist Pharrell Williams for posing in a headdress for Elle magazine in 2014. (Doug English/Elle Magazine)

The latest affront to the sensitivities of First Nations people comes from Adam Sandler and his movie, *Ridiculous Six*.

This follows other high-profile incidents: Fans misrepresenting sacred symbols at sports events; citizens and celebrities alike wearing Halloween costumes that degrade native spirituality; fashion shows that exploit the authenticity of indigenous clothing styles — all of which have taken place in the past year.

One has to wonder what isolation chamber these people have been living in not to know that using First Nations culture for advertising or entertainment is pretty much bad news: Sooner or later, they are going to get called on it and there is going to be a hullabaloo of complaints.

Perhaps these people believe in the old adage, "There's no such thing as bad publicity" — if the controversy draws attention to your product or event, you get free "advertising".

Then there could be those who are simply arrogant enough to think they are above the fray; they believe they can brush off the critics by saying they are "too sensitive."

And then there are those who are I enough to think they can convince First Nations they meant no harm and/or the image is actually good for them.

So what can we do to prevent this calamity from creeping up time and again? Ask First Nations people what they think about the appropriateness of the action you are planning beforehand.

And take the time to listen to and understand the concerns First Nations are raising. Perhaps there is a way to compromise and work together for the common good.

Centuries of misunderstanding

We must keep in mind these misunderstandings have been going on for centuries.

Indigenous people have learned to keep a watchful eye over the stereotypes and racist symbols that are often used to portray their culture and spirituality.

When the U.S. Cavalry met this great Hunkpapa Lakota medicine man who told them he was named for the leader of a herd who would rest on his haunches on a high vantage point to watch for enemies, they called “Resting Monarch on the Plains” by the name “Sitting Bull.”

It’s the same with “He Has the Spirit of his Horses,” who came to be called “Crazy Horse.”

Television shows and movies are the biggest culprits. Sometimes they get away with it because the program is a product of its time and simply reflects that.

But when an episode of *Mad Men* includes a pitch for an ice treat called “Sno-Balls” by featuring pictures of kids throwing real snowballs at teachers, a cop and an “Indian Chief” (the “things kids hate,” the pitch man says) you have to wonder why a kid from the ‘60s would automatically hate Indians.

Insults creep into TV shows today, like when a character on *Mike and Molly* calls Arizona “a furnace full of drunk Indians.”

The insults Sandler is throwing around have been printed elsewhere, but they are so degrading they are not worth re-printing here.

Sandler’s insensitivity was exacerbated when the native cast of *Ridiculous Six* rose up and pointed out that even his oft-accepted crude infantilism was going too far.

They were simply told, “Well, if you are that sensitive, get off the set.”

Listen closely, don’t rush in

The obvious solution to most of the misrepresentation is to ask First Nations people/leaders what they think of what you intend to do. This is why there hasn’t been much outcry over the use of Seminole culture by Florida State University.

Unlike most other college and pro sports teams, FSU has asked tribal elders to advise them about how Seminole culture should be represented.

It is just as important to listen closely to what the indigenous leaders have to say.

Sometimes, in our headlong rush to defend our native friends, we go too far and they end up answering for issues they have not raised.

The best example of this is the movie *Tonto*, which has been widely panned by mainstream critics for, among other things, casting an actor with distant aboriginal heritage (Johnny Depp), costumes which placed a crow on Depp's head, and the fact that neither Depp (Cherokee/Creek) nor the crow (Trickster) were from the same nation as the *Tonto* character (Comanche).

I have asked many of my First Nations friends what they thought of the movie and they all loved it.

‘Cultural faux pas’ antennas not up

It's not just because the *Tonto* character plays the lead this time, but because they know they weren't supposed to have their “cultural faux pas” antennas up for this offering.

The movie was a takeoff on a fictional television show — a classic from the '50s genre of westerns. There is no real Tonto and The Lone Ranger was pure fantasy.

Shingoose (Ojibway) and comedian Charlie Hill (Oneida) had the same attitude when we produced *Heroes Heaven*, a comedy sketch about Tonto and The Lone Ranger attempting a comeback.

Hill wore suede instead of buckskin and his breech cloth was a terry cloth towel. We even made sure to include some wayward boom microphones in our shots and placed a hair or two on the camera lens.

We were trying to be authentic about what we were portraying.

If somebody makes a film about “Crazy Horse,” one would expect the producers to bend over backwards to get the culture right. “The Lone Ranger” was a completely different thing.

Again, how do we know this?

We only need to ask. And to listen.

Don Marks is a Winnipeg writer and the editor of Grassroots News.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/manitoba/how-do-we-stop-misrepresenting-first-nations-culture-just-ask-1.3054569>

Graffiti makes half-First Nations, half-white family on reserve

First posted: Sunday, May 03, 2015 07:22 PM EDT | Updated: Sunday, May 03, 2015 07:31 PM EDT



Sign in Kahnawake. (Postmedia Network files)

KAHNAWAKE, Que. – A mixed couple living on a First Nations reserve south of Montreal say they are living in fear after their home was vandalized and the target of an attempted Molotov attack Saturday night.

Terri McComber has lived in Kahnawake, Que., since marrying her husband Marvin 26 years ago.

In the fall, mixed couples living in the territory, including the McCombers, received notices that they were in violation of a 1981 residency law and had to move by May 1.

The law that states that a Mohawk living in the territory who marries a non-Mohawk after the law was enacted is no longer allowed to live there.

When the deadline passed and the McCombers hadn't moved, signs were placed around their home with slogans like "Marry out get out," and their car was spray painted.

At 11 p.m. Saturday, McComber said two boys tried to throw a Molotov cocktail into her home.

"You can only imagine the pain and tears," McComber told The Montreal Gazette.

A spokesman for the Mohawk Council of Kahnawake (MCK) told The Gazette that while the law has widespread support, there is "no excuse" for vandalism.

The McCombers are plaintiffs in a lawsuit against the MCK that aims to overturn the 1981 law on Constitutional grounds.

Direct Link: <http://www.torontosun.com/2015/05/03/graffiti-makes-half-first-nations-half-white-family-on-reserve>

Destination Cape Breton ad panned for omitting First Nation culture

Association says spot just one of a number being produced and others will include First Nations

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 04, 2015 10:09 AM AT Last Updated: May 05, 2015 5:32 AM AT

A local filmmaker is criticizing a new Cape Breton tourism spot for not featuring First Nation culture, but the association behind the advertisement says it's just one in a number that will be rolled out.

In the Destination Cape Breton ad, narrated by Cape Breton-born journalist Linden MacIntyre, visitors are asked to "follow your heart... it will lead you to unique cultures."

But the cultures shown in the video are limited to Scottish and French, says filmmaker Madeline Yakimchuk.

"If you look at it again, everybody is white in it," she said.



Madeline Yakimchuk sent Destination Cape Breton a letter after they aired their new ad. (Facebook)

"Of course you get into the overall racism angle on it. I work with the Mi'kmaq so that is what I noticed"

She sent Destination Cape Breton a letter questioning why the founding culture of Cape Breton is not given a few frames and says she was ashamed of the ad.

But the chief of executive of Destination Cape Breton says this is just the first in a number of advertisements, and it is aimed at Torontonians who are most interested in the Cabot Trail.

“If we were going into Germany, we would absolutely lead with our First Nations, our aboriginal, because that’s very much one of the key reasons they choose to come to Nova Scotia,” says Mary Tulle. “They want to experience that.”

Someone else who is surprised by the criticism is Eskasoni First Nations resident Tracy Menge, who is co-chair of the Unimaki Tourism Association and is on the board of Destination Cape Breton.

“I never took it as anywhere near racist or discriminatory,” she says.

“We look forward to having our piece in a future video. There’s a lot of information they needed to capture in our 30-second video clip. They can’t do it all in one shot.”

Even so, critics of the commercial are not buying the reasoning, and while glad there will be other videos promoting Cape Breton, are still unhappy with the first.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/nova-scotia/destination-cape-breton-ad-panned-for-omitting-first-nation-culture-1.3059836>

Earls Restaurant server’s racial remarks prompt apology to aboriginal filmmaker

‘I don’t think that this young lady is racist. I think she said the wrong thing,’ says Laura Milliken

By Daybreak North, [CBC News](#) Posted: May 05, 2015 12:29 PM PT Last Updated: May 05, 2015 3:17 PM PT



Laura Milliken, a Toronto-based filmmaker, was working on a documentary in Prince George, B.C. when she says a restaurant server made racial remarks. (Laura Milliken/Facebook)

Earls Restaurants has apologized after a server in their Prince George, B.C. restaurant made racial remarks to aboriginal filmmaker Laura Milliken three weeks ago.

I don't think that this young lady is racist. I think she said the wrong thing.- *Laura Milliken, filmmaker*

The Toronto-based filmmaker, who is Ojibwe, says she was shocked by the incident, which occurred while she was visiting the northern city to work on a documentary about keeping aboriginal youth in school.

Milliken was eating at the upmarket restaurant with a colleague, also Ojibwe, and the pair were having what she describes as a "nice conversation" with their server, when things took an unexpected turn, she says.

"My colleague said, 'My father was concerned because he heard there was a very really high crime rate in Prince George,'" Milliken told *Daybreak North's* Russell Bowers.

"The server responded it was because of all the aboriginal people, specifically the homeless aboriginal people."

Milliken said she told the server her statement stereotypes aboriginal people.

"That's when I told her I'm Ojibwe, and she said, 'Oh, I'm so sorry.'"

'We all have to learn from this'

Milliken followed up with the management at the restaurant, and is asking for staff to undergo sensitivity training.

"I don't think that this young lady is racist. I think she said the wrong thing. I think I had to tell her that she said the wrong thing and I think we all have to learn from this and think about what we're saying," she said.

Earls Restaurants have since sent a letter to Milliken, apologizing for the incident. It goes on to say the issue has been addressed at the restaurant.

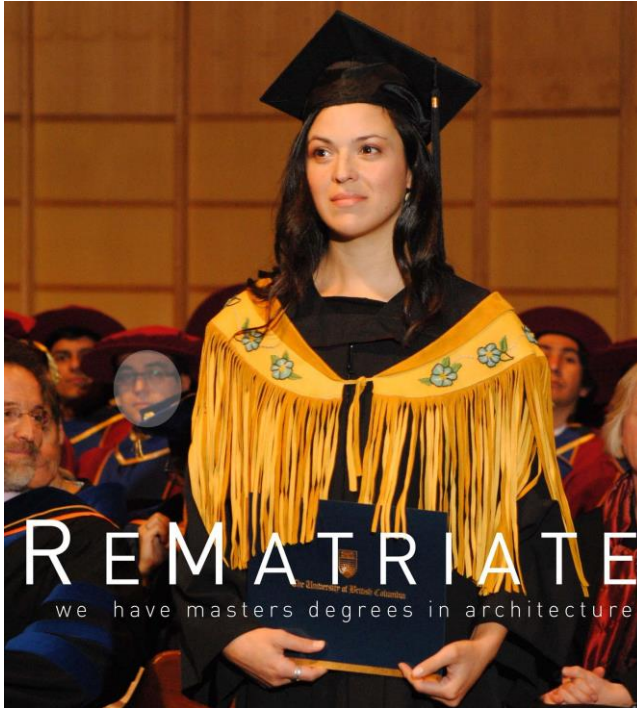
"We have spoken to our First Nations team members and asked that our next staff meetings are centred around the issue of sensitivity in this matter," reads the letter, which is signed by spokesperson Cate Simpson.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/british-columbia/earls-restaurant-server-s-racial-remarks-prompt-apology-to-aboriginal-filmmaker-1.3061871>

Canada's ReMatriate Movement Takes on Fashion's Indigenous Cultural Appropriation

May 5, 2015

By Meagan Wohlberg



Ta'une (Kelly Edzerza-Bapty) is Tahltan of the Stikine River and Headwaters, and is one of only three indigenous women to complete the Master of Architecture program at University of British Columbia.

This post originally appeared on VICE Canada.

From fluorescent feathered headdresses at indie-pop festivals to Urban Outfitters “[smudge kits](#),” to runway [fashion](#) shows like Dsquared2’s offensive “[Dsquaw](#)” line, racist knockoffs that appropriate indigenous art, culture, and identities have become a common controversy across North America in recent months.

While on the surface it may seem that the objection lies in the obvious issue of cultural and intellectual property theft, it’s the robbery of indigenous peoples’ right to represent themselves that’s actually at stake, according to activists behind a new campaign to reclaim the visual representations of indigenous women and culture.

“It’s taking away our ability to even authentically represent our own cultures,” said Kelly Edzerza-Bapty, an intern architect from the Tahltan Nation in northern BC and one of the

founders of ReMatriate, a photographic campaign that provides a drastically different image of indigenous women than the stereotypical tropes found in popular culture.

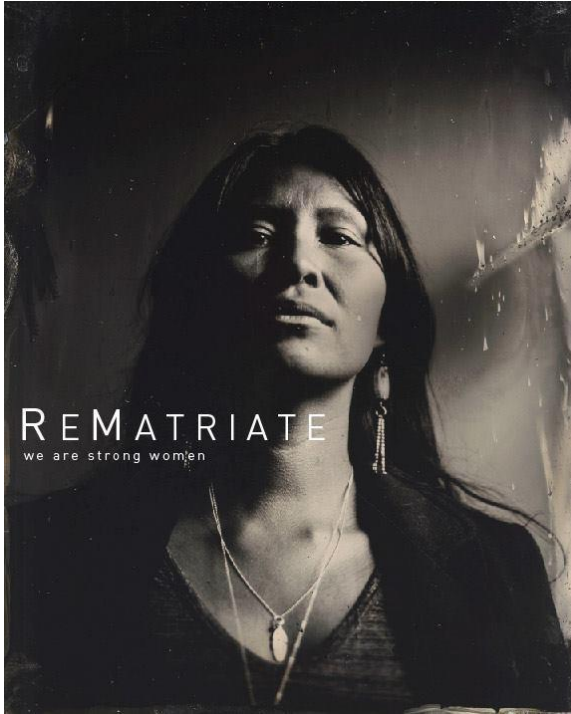


Angela Code is Sayisi Dene from northern Manitoba.

ReMatriate is the response to those stereotypes, said Clair Anderson, a Taku River Tlingit lawyer living in Whitehorse, who is also part of the movement, which is meant to put indigenous women back in control of the way they are represented and to honor the respected traditional roles indigenous women held before colonization.

Since launching on social media earlier this year, the campaign has attracted over a thousand followers and featured photos of indigenous women engaged in a combination of traditional and contemporary tasks in various locations, fighting the notion of the homogenous “aboriginal.”

“We want to step away from being portrayed as monolithic or as historic relics,” Anderson said. “We wanted to highlight the fact that we aren’t historic figures. We are modern women. Some of us are academics, some of us are lawyers, some of us are architects, and we all continue to practice our culture in different ways, whether it’s weaving or dancing or hunting or tanning hides. We just wanted to show the complexity, but also how we’ve incorporated these traditions into our modern life.”



Artist and actor Melaw Nakehk'o, Dehcho Dene from Denendeh (NWT), photographed by Kaska Dena artist Kali Spitzer from Daylu (BC).

Edzerza-Bapty, who is herself featured in photos harvesting wild salmon and receiving her Master of Architecture from the University of British Columbia, said communities are now beginning to bounce back from the impacts of colonization and residential schools, and this bouncing back is facilitated greatly by the regeneration of language and cultural practices.

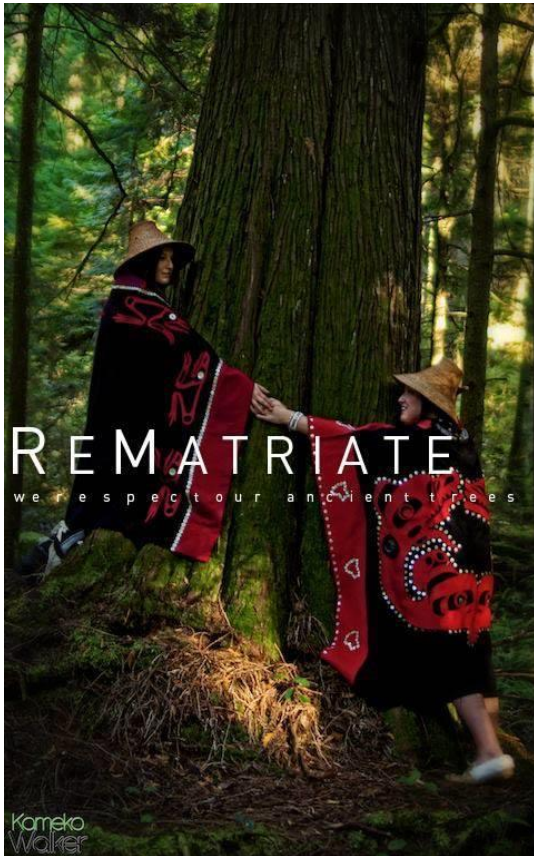
Though some of those traditional art forms and regalia are meant to be kept sacred, she said others are offered openly for sale to the larger public. Unfortunately, according to Edzerza-Bapty, the appropriation of that work has a cheapening effect on those efforts.

“From an artistic sense, as clever and sophisticated as these big name designers think they’re being, to the trained eye of indigenous people, they’re extremely remedial and often childlike efforts at creating centuries-old traditional art forms,” she said. “It devalues the actual art pieces when you have creations that are kind of gesture-like approaches to the art form. They really take away the value out of authenticity.”

Recently, the New York Fashion Week designer behind [KTZ](#) said his fall/winter 2015 line—which caused outrage after it was pointed out that the clothes were blatant rip-offs of contemporary indigenous designers—was “a tribute to the primal woman, indigenous to this land, who evolves into a sexualized, empowered being.”

Native Appropriations blogger Adrienne Keene [wrote](#) that, far from being a tribute, such a description constituted a “mockery and celebration of cultural theft.”

However, it's a kind of crime that doesn't offer a lot of legal recourse, according to Anderson.



Sister duo Meghann and Nalaga Avis O'Brien, Haida/Kwakwaka'wakw artists.

“We can't really turn to intellectual property rights as protections because these art forms have existed in our families or clan systems for multiple generations... and it's gotten to the point now where in copyright laws, it now belongs in the public domain because it's persisted with the one group for over 50 years,” she explained.

Anderson said there is a trend in the law when it comes to who it protects and who it excludes. Indigenous people are often left on the outskirts, not just when it comes to intellectual property rights, but on issues of child protection and criminal justice. This is clear when you look at the record high number of indigenous [children in care](#)—three times that during the height of [residential school](#)—and the more than [1,200 missing and murdered](#) indigenous women in Canada.

Apart from infringing on the intellectual property of indigenous peoples, Anderson worries about the ways that inaccurate and offensive representations “trickle” into other areas of society, where indigenous women and girls are vulnerable to violence, both on a personal and systemic level.

“The image of a hypersexualized indigenous woman portrayed by an outsider isn’t just one isolated event. It’s a pattern,” she said.

The [death of Cindy Gladue](#) illustrates Anderson’s fears. The 36-year-old Cree woman bled to death in 2011 after suffering a fatal wound to her vagina. Her preserved pelvis was then brought into the courtroom as evidence during the trial last month, where the man accused of first degree murder and manslaughter in her death was acquitted after the defense successfully argued the two had engaged in “rough, consensual sex,” despite Gladue having been four times the legal blood alcohol level.

“It’s hard to just ignore what harm there is in presenting the identity of indigenous women as hypersexual, passive beings,” Anderson said. “Because we’re not. We’re complex, educated, smart, driven women. We’re more than just the image that’s being portrayed, and that image is actually having harmful effects that are seen in courtrooms and seen in police investigations.

“It’s gotten to the point where, while we’re able to, we have to voice that we don’t consent to this representation, for all the women who weren’t able to say that they didn’t consent to the way that they were treated. We feel it’s an obligation.”

The actively unfolding ReMatriate exhibit is available on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Tumblr](#), but with cascading interest in the project, Edzerza-Bapty said it’s likely to grow into more types of media and likely a curated photographic exhibition in galleries across Canada.

Regional representatives of the campaign are also being recruited across the continent, with the hopes that participation in panel discussions and media interviews will continue contributing to the public dialogue around cultural appropriation, while simultaneously introducing the public to people and cultures they might never have known existed.

“In BC alone, there are over 200 distinct First Nations, and that says nothing of the number there are in Canada or North America,” Edzerza-Bapty said.

“Really what we’re trying to capture with this is just the breadth of the number of distinct First Nations cultures that actually exist in this landscape, from the urban indigenous to extremely rural communities. There’s a very broad lens through which indigenous people sit. We’re not this kind of homogenized or tokenist image. We’re from very vast cultures over a massive land base.”

Direct Link: <http://www.vice.com/read/rematriate-movement-takes-on-fashions-indigenous-cultural-appropriation-283>

CMHR ‘model of complacency’

Ex-employee blasts limits on indigenous exhibits

By: Mary Agnes Welch

Posted: 05/6/2015 7:00 PM Last Modified: 05/6/2015 10:48 PM |



A former curator at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights says she was ordered to limit negative stories about missing and murdered indigenous women and the state of aboriginal child welfare and remove the term 'genocide' from any indigenous exhibits.

A former curator at the Canadian Museum for Human Rights says she was ordered to limit negative stories about missing and murdered women and the state of aboriginal child welfare.

She says she was also told to remove the term "genocide" from any indigenous exhibits.

"As a curator at the CMHR, I was consistently reminded that every mention of state-perpetrated atrocity against indigenous peoples in Canada must be matched with a "balanced" statement that indicates reconciliation, apology or compensation provided by the government. In cases where those issues are not reconciled or where accusations of abuse against the government continue to this day, the stories are reduced in scope or are removed from the museum."

"As curator, I have been ordered to limit coverage of stories of aboriginal children in the child welfare system, missing and murdered women in Canada and climate change... I was also instructed to remove the terms "genocide" and "settler colonial genocide" from all indigenous exhibits."

"In contrast to the (United States Holocaust Memorial Museum) or the (National Museum of the American Indian), the CMHR is currently hiding controversies and glossing over histories of gay rights, child welfare, climate change and corporate crimes against human rights. While other museums move to challenge visitors and provoke them to change, CMHR is accepting a model of complacency and promotion of the status quo."

“A demand for more ‘positive Canadian content’ and promotion of a government-sanctioned history of Canada has increasingly relegated an already-marginalized aboriginal history to a critically under-representative segment of the museum.”

— *Source: National memory and museums. Remembering settler colonial genocide of Indigenous peoples in Canada, chapter in Remembering Genocide, edited by Nigel Eltringham (University of Sussex) and Pam Maclean (Deakin University), 2014.*

In a sharply worded chapter in a new academic book on genocide, Tricia Logan, who served as the CMHR’s curator of indigenous content for three years, says the museum is “a model of complacency and promotion of the status quo.”

She says stories of the wrongs done to indigenous people were watered down in an effort to promote positive Canadian content.

“As curator, I have been ordered to limit coverage of stories of aboriginal children in the child-welfare system, missing and murdered women in Canada and climate change,” she wrote. “I was also instructed to remove the terms ‘genocide’ and ‘settler colonial genocide’ from all indigenous exhibits.”

Specifically, Logan says in July 2013, she was asked to remove the term “genocide” from the small exhibit on Canada’s colonial history and its treatment of indigenous peoples.

“As a curator at the CMHR, I was consistently reminded that every mention of state-perpetrated atrocity against indigenous peoples in Canada must be matched with a ‘balanced’ statement that indicates reconciliation, apology or compensation provided by the government,” she wrote. “In cases where those issues are not reconciled or where accusations of abuse against the government continue to this day, the stories are reduced in scope or are removed from the museum.”

Logan’s article was published last summer in a volume edited by genocide experts from the University of Sussex in England and Deakin University in Australia.

But the Canadian Museum for Human Rights says it has worked hard to build trust and relationships with indigenous groups, who helped guide content. Staff said it’s not correct to suggest topics such as missing and murdered women or child welfare got short shrift.

Aboriginal child welfare is mentioned in an exhibit about the legacy of residential schools, including a video featuring a young woman who ended up in a loving foster home but whose mother jumped through hoops to regain custody. And there are several exhibits featuring the issue of missing and murdered aboriginal women, including a mention of repeated calls for a national inquiry.

The issue of genocide is discussed in the museum’s Breaking the Silence gallery, which features exhibits on the five genocides recognized by the Canadian government and also

features a “Mission Impossible” interactive table where patrons can read about other atrocities, including residential schools. There, a text panel reads: “Many Canadians, both indigenous and non-indigenous, share the view that Canada’s historic treatment of indigenous peoples was genocide.”

Because the museum is federally mandated, it cannot declare what happened to indigenous people a genocide without running afoul of Ottawa.

“We’re allowing people to draw their own conclusions, to have their own informed discussions,” said spokeswoman Louise Waldman.

Even before it opened last fall, the museum was frequently accused of caving to pressure from its Conservative-appointed board and of glossing over some of Canada’s troubling human rights record in order to present more positive stories.

In July 2013, the museum’s decision to avoid using the word “genocide” to describe Canada’s aboriginal policies during the last century made headlines, and sparked criticism from indigenous leaders and academics.

Few staff members have been willing to speak on the record about the museum’s internal content-creation process.

In her article, Logan noted lobbying from Ukrainian and Jewish groups kept the museum’s treatment of the Holocaust and the Holodomor top-of-mind in the battle for floor space. That “undoubtedly impacted museum design and development,” she said.

But First Nations, Métis and Inuit groups never launched the same kind of lobbying effort, in part because they were busy with more pressing, real-life emergencies, Logan said. That dynamic “relegated and already-marginalized aboriginal history to a critically under-representative segment of the museum.”

Logan, who has been working on a PhD at the University of London, was unwilling to speak further about her article. But she said in a brief email the article was based on information from 2011 and 2012.

“Obviously, the information is out of date and clearly the museum and museum mandate have changed a great deal from that time,” she said without elaboration.

Logan left the museum shortly after the genocide controversy in July and August 2013.

Direct Link: <http://www.winnipegfreepress.com/local/Former-curator-of-CMHR-says-she-was-ordered-to-limit-aboriginal-content-302847231.html>

Aboriginal Jobs & Labour

Stepping Stones career fair for aboriginal youth

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 06, 2015 8:56 PM CT Last Updated: May 06, 2015 8:56 PM CT

A career fair in Regina Wednesday offered indigenous youth an opportunity to check out potential employers.

Chase Pelletier and Josh Montana were among the students attending the fair. Both hope to join the RCMP.

They had a chance to speak to representatives of the RCMP to learn more about the job and how to prepare for it.

"They were very genuine and told us what we needed to do," Montana said. "Like be fit."

Montana said he hopes to further his education as well.

"Personally, I want to be [with the] RCMP," he said. "In college I'm probably going to take law and justice, or human rights. Something like that, that will help along the road and get me a further career."

Pelletier also has his eye on joining the RCMP.

"When I was little I always wanted to be in the RCMP," he said. "It was just a dream I had."

"Me also. I just wanted to help people, be there and also make a difference," Montana added.

The career fair featured a variety of options for young people to consider, spanning many professions.

Earl Greyeyes, a job coach with Construction Careers Regina, a part of the Saskatchewan Indian Institute of Technologies, said good training can open many doors.

"With the right determination the challenges aren't really there," Greyeyes said. "Training is available throughout our organization at seven different locations around the province."

He added that a key element to many trades is meeting minimum age and education requirements.

"Education is a big thing and that's the one thing that we promote," he said. "Make sure they stay in school, get their Grade 12."

Depending on the trade, initial training programs run for seven to 10 weeks. He said SIIT has courses for welding, carpentry, and many other jobs in a variety of construction trades.

"The kids want the good jobs," he said. "They understand that trades are a viable option in order to have a career."

The Stepping Stones career fair is an annual event. Organizers work with over 70 organizations and post-secondary institutions that have committed to recruiting First Nation, Métis and Inuit people.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/saskatchewan/stepping-stones-career-fair-for-aboriginal-youth-1.3064279?cmp=rss>

Aboriginal Politics

Paul Martin says 2015 budget fails aboriginal Canadians

Conservative budget commits 'gross negligence' of aboriginals, former Liberal prime minister says

By Katharine Starr, [CBC News](#) Posted: Apr 30, 2015 7:35 AM ET Last Updated: Apr 30, 2015 7:35 AM ET

The federal government is failing the country's aboriginal people with a budget that has "virtually nothing" in it for native Canadians, says former Liberal Prime Minister Paul Martin.

Describing the Conservatives' federal budget as "gross negligence" in terms of aboriginal funding, Martin blasted the government's financial commitment to aboriginal education and health care.

"You have to ask yourself, why are they ignoring decent health care in the North? Why is the government ignoring decent education?" Martin told host Evan Solomon in an interview on CBC News Network's *Power & Politics*.

"This huge under-funding of health care and education has come home to roost."

Martin: AG report not surprising

Martin's remarks came one day after the federal auditor general released a report detailing serious problems in accessing health care in remote First Nations communities in Manitoba and Ontario.

Some of the issues included a nursing station residence that was unusable for more than two years because of a broken septic system, leading medical specialists to cancel visits, as well as the discovery that only one of 45 nurses in the group sampled by auditors finished all five mandatory Health Canada training courses chosen for the audit.

"The fact is, there are nurses who will go up north, there are nurses who can be trained," Martin said.

"There's a cost to that, there's a cost to paying the kind of salaries required and to make sure they have that kind of training. But for heaven's sake, there are Canadians living up north. They're entitled to the same kind of health care you and I are entitled to."

How much for education, health care?

In a statement to CBC News, Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt's office called Martin's comments "completely false" and outlined the department's commitments to Canada's Aboriginal Peoples in the 2015 federal budget.

The budget, tabled April 21, earmarks \$2 million annually — starting next year — for mental health services in First Nations communities.

On education, \$200 million over five years is set aside "to help support First Nations to achieve better education outcomes, including building partnerships with provincial school systems" while an additional \$12 million will provide post-secondary scholarships to First Nations and Inuit students.

The budget says \$30.3 million over five years will go to expanding the First Nations Land Management Regime to create opportunities for economic development on reserve.

But Martin doesn't believe the measures are enough to solve what he calls a "moral issue" facing the country.

"Canadians would not tolerate it if they really knew there was a whole generation of aboriginal Canadians who have a chance at a better education and are being denied it," he said.

The former prime minister, who created the non-profit Martin Aboriginal Education Initiative after retiring from politics, isn't the only critic of the government's budget allotment to aboriginal Canadians.

National Chief Perry Bellegarde of the Assembly of First Nations described the budget as "a status-quo budget," and added "the status quo is not acceptable."

"We don't see any investments in housing to deal with the 130,000 units we need. We don't see investments in education on reserves. There's still a huge fiscal imbalance there," he said.

"We don't see any investments even in access to potable water. There are still 93 communities with boil-water advisories."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/politics/paul-martin-says-2015-budget-fails-aboriginal-canadians-1.3054485>

Rocking the aboriginal vote: Alberta community leaders note increased political engagement

By Julia LeConte, Edmonton Journal May 4, 2015

EDMONTON - Katherine Swampy, the NDP candidate for Drayton Valley-Devon, is logging a long day on the campaign trail, door-knocking in Ermineskin Cree First Nation and Louis Bull First Nation.

They are two of the four nations that make up Maskwacis, where she is from.

"I don't think any of the other parties have been to any of these houses. I'm not seeing signs, and when I'm door knocking, they're surprised," she says. "All the other houses I've gone to (off the reserves) had tons of people knocking."

Surprised and happy. Not happy because Swampy is aboriginal, per se, but because, she says, "there's someone there who's actually looking out for them."

When asked how many aboriginal candidates they had running in this election, the Conservatives and the NDP reported two each, while the Liberals said they had one. The Wildrose said they had one candidate with U.S. treaty status through his spouse, one who was born to a First Nation but wasn't raised there, and one who has First Nations nieces and nephews.

Those numbers may seem low, but Swampy, 29, is seeing more aboriginal candidates than ever before, and she's not the only one.

Community advocate Lewis Cardinal does, too — from the time he ran for city council back in 2007, to his bid to represent Edmonton Centre in the 2011 federal election (running for the NDP he came second to the Conservative Laurie Hawn), to observing the current provincial election. He sees it as part of a larger trend to political engagement.

Elections Canada published a study in 2012 analyzing voter turnout on First Nations reserves during the 2011 federal election. It was significantly lower than the general population. But on-reserve voting faces myriad challenges.

As well, those polls don't account for urban aboriginals; in Alberta, the majority of the aboriginal population lives in urban centres.

Elections Alberta has not conducted any similar study.

Cardinal, who worked on the Urban Aboriginal Peoples Study conducted by Environics in 2009 — which interviewed First Nations, Métis and Inuit people in 11 Canadian cities including Edmonton — believes that urban aboriginal voter turnout is on the upswing.

“It's because we're more ingrained or interactive within our communities. In Edmonton, the aboriginal population is not quartered into one area. We're spread out in all different kinds of communities,” he says, pointing out no neighbourhood has a higher aboriginal population than 15 per cent.

When it comes to the pending Alberta election, the issues that matter to aboriginals, says Cardinal, such as health care and education, are the same ones that matter to the general population.

Where aboriginal interests might differ from the general population is in how the parties recognize treaties and aboriginal rights.

Joseph Jobin, chief operating officer of Treaty 8 First Nations of Alberta, explains that aboriginal concerns are broader than First Nations issues. “First Nations are a subset of aboriginals and the issues of treaty rights are different from aboriginal rights.”

On the road from Slave Lake — where he was attending a strategic planning meeting with various First Nations communities — to Treaty 8's Edmonton office, Jobin describes, via a wonky cellphone connection, the election efforts Treaty 8 makes through email, fax, its website and Facebook.

“We're trying to get the information out. Who are the candidates? What are the parties? Where do you vote? What's the registration process?”

Treaty 8 has invited the party leaders to meet with its leadership to talk policy and a letter is going out to all parties asking about positions on such issues closing the education gap and protection of traditional territories.

A candidate, Jobin points out, might be an exemplary constituency rep, but are they a strong voice for First Nations people?

“There are many reasons that aboriginal people feel disconnected from the Canadian political milieu,” says Patti LaBoucane-Benson, director of research, training and communication for Native Counselling Services of Alberta.

“Our colonial history has not been inclusive and aboriginal people have not had a voice in the development of policies that have had devastating effects on their families and communities.”

But she, too, believes the tide is turning.

“First Nations and Métis people are more engaged than ever. I believe more work has to be done by politicians and riding associations to include aboriginal people in the grassroots political movements ... more inclusion in the political process and relationship building.”

Elections Alberta, says Jobin, is a lot easier to deal with than Elections Canada. That might be because they work with an aboriginal liaison, Leslie Losier, who helps co-ordinate efforts with reserve leadership to get permission to put polling stations on reserves.

Back in the Treaty 6 communities in her riding, Swampy sees optimism.

“More people are willing to run after seeing an aboriginal candidate — that offers hope for younger generations.”

Swampy has participated in Grade 6 debates, teenagers from Maskwacis have told her they look forward to the day when they can run, and she’s heard from many who will be first-time voters.

“I see a lot of support,” she says, stressing that it’s not just from the aboriginal community.

“I was knocking on a door in Drayton Valley, and a lady was absolutely thrilled to see an aboriginal woman running. Not just an aboriginal, but an aboriginal woman. She said it gave her hope that there was going to be change in the future.”

Direct Link:

<http://www.edmontonjournal.com/Rocking+aboriginal+vote+Alberta+community+leader+s+note+increased+political+engagement/11025684/story.html>

Train journey aims to spark First Nations dialogue

[Katherine Dedyna](#) / Times Colonist
May 5, 2015 06:00 AM



Will Weigler at the Mungo Martin-carved totem poles near the Royal B.C. Museum.

Photograph By BRUCE STOTESBURY, Times Colonist

Whether your ancestors arrived from the 13 states during the American Revolution or emigrated from overseas last year, all Canadians have reconciliation work to do with First Nations people, says Will Weigler.

The Victoria playwright, originally from Oregon, hopes to get non-aboriginals across Canada to acknowledge the ways they have benefited from centuries of colonization.

“We make assumptions that we may not even be aware of, based on myths and misunderstanding,” said Weigler, who is part of the Train of Thought, a six-week journey mostly by Via Rail to 20 communities from B.C. to P.E.I., leaving in mid-May. He’ll be joined at various points by 60 members of community-based theatre groups across the country during the journey, funded by various philanthropic groups, along with the Canada Council for the Arts and the Ontario Arts Council.

Participants will have meals and conversations with other artists, native and non-native, about “decolonization” and improving the relationship between First Nations and settler/immigrant cultures.

The Train of Thought builds on the 2013 show *From The Heart: Enter into the journey of reconciliation*, staged in a 14,000-square-foot indoor labyrinth at Uptown.

In the show, which Weigler co-produced with Kwakwaka’wakw writer Krystal Cook, about 100 non-aboriginal people rotated through 17 songs, performances and shadow theatre.

Weigler hopes his new book on the production, to be launched Thursday at 7 p.m. at First Metropolitan Church, will allow community groups to build their own labyrinths and tell their own stories.

The book is called From the Heart: How 100 Canadians Created an Unconventional Theatre Performance about Reconciliation.

“The point of the show is what we learned in building it,” Weigler said. One performer was a seventh generation Canadian descended from United Empire Loyalists who came to Canada during the American Revolution. She came to understand that her ancestors were given the land of First Nations people who went to fight for Canada against the U.S. “Her family did well because right from the get-go, they were on this land.”

The performances were not about lecturing the audience about what they need to do or their country should do, he said. “It was always about being witnesses to the stories that moved us.”

Weigler said he was originally inspired by Paulette Regan’s 2011 book Unsettling the Settler Within, which argued for the need for non-aboriginals to own up to the way their culture dismissed aboriginal experience.

There is much to be acknowledged, Weigler said. “Reconciliation isn’t a tick box that we’re going to achieve. It’s an ongoing process. It’s a matter of figuring out what we need to do. An invitation to start walking down that road.”

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/news/local/train-journey-aims-to-spark-first-nations-dialogue-1.1874292#sthash.R50Txnhb.dpuf>

Kamloops band chief running for regional chief of Assembly of First Nations

Christopher Foulds , Kamloops This Week / The Canadian Press
May 6, 2015 03:48 PM

KAMLOOPS, B.C. - The chief of the First Nations band in Kamloops, B.C., has decided to run for regional chief of the Assembly of First Nations.

Shane Gottfriedson said that regardless of the outcome of the vote on June 25, he will not seek re-election in November as chief of the Tk'emlups Indian Band.

Gottfriedson became the first candidate for regional chief as the 203 First Nations communities in B.C. prepare to decide who will succeed Jody Wilson-Raybould, who is now a federal Liberal candidate in a Vancouver riding.

Gottfriedson was elected chief in Kamloops in 2003 and has served four successive terms. He said he decided to forego a shot at a fifth term because he wanted to focus on the next step in his career.

"I think 12 years of community service is a good run," he said. "I think it's time for me to look at a new career path. I think I'll always be a leader in the community."

Gottfriedson considered running for national chief last year after the sudden resignation of Shawn Atleo, but decided against a campaign.

"I think I can make a greater impact at the provincial level," Gottfriedson said. "My work in the community speaks for itself. I've got a proven track record."

Gottfriedson ran for regional chief in 2009 and came within nine votes of sitting in that office.

"This time, I'm taking a different perspective into this campaign," he said, noting the next six weeks will see him visit as many of the First Nations communities in B.C. as possible.

In his speech to band members, Gottfriedson said there has been a lack of leadership in B.C. in the past six years.

"Land claims scare the hell out of investors," he said. "If you treat me and my people fairly, there is nothing to be afraid of. We will not back down, but the door is always open to a fair deal."

Arguing Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government has continued a policy of "extinguishing native peoples' land rights," Gottfriedson said it is time for a unified approach to aboriginal title rights and treaty.

"Canada and B.C. have learned we can be their greatest ally or their darkest nightmare," he said. "The choice is obvious."

As for issues such as the proposed Ajax gold-copper mine project near Kamloops, Gottfriedson pointed to the twice-denied Prosperity project in the Chilcotin as proof that industry needs to start working with communities. (Kamloops This Week)

- See more at: <http://www.timescolonist.com/kamloops-band-chief-running-for-regional-chief-of-assembly-of-first-nations-1.1926885#sthash.kYwD6KGL.dpuf>

Tories Kill Bill Urging 'Harmony' Between Canadian Law And First Nations

The Huffington Post Canada | By [Zi-Ann Lum](#)

Posted: 05/07/2015 3:00 pm EDT Updated: 05/07/2015 7:59 pm EDT



A NDP-sponsored bill proposing Canada align its laws with the United Nations [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) was defeated Wednesday.

The Conservative government used its majority to reject Romeo Saganash's private member's bill, five months after it was first introduced to the House of Commons.

In a statement after the vote, Saganash said he was disappointed with the outcome.

"Conservatives ignored Canadians and voted down a piece of legislation that would uphold the fundamental rights of indigenous peoples," said the Quebec MP.

He added that [Bill C-641](#) "was not a matter of left against right, but right against wrong."

NDP MP Niki Ashton brought up the bill in question period on Thursday, criticizing the Tories' stance.

"By rejecting this bill, the government missed another opportunity to engage in genuine partnership with First Nations, Metis and Inuit," Ashton said.

Canada's Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt called Ashton's remark a "baseless and totally false charge."

"Stop the grandstanding," Valcourt said, pointing out that the Tory government amended the Humans Rights Act "to ensure people on reserves have the same rights as Canadians."

Every Liberal and NDP MP who attended the bill's second reading voted for its passage. Independent MPs Massimo Pacetti and Scott Andrews also voted in its favour.

148 Conservatives MPs plus Independent MP James Lunney voted against the bill — a fatal blow blocking it from advancing it to committee hearings and further study.

The Assembly of First Nations released a statement condemning the federal government, calling the bill's defeat "a betrayal."

“Canada consistently pretends to be a defender of human rights on the international stage while working to undermine those same rights here at home,” said National Chief Perry Bellegarde.

In a debate earlier this year on Saganash’s bill, Mark Strahl, parliamentary secretary for Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development, said the government has pledged to protect First Nations rights.

“We have also been clear from the outset that while we support the general principles behind the declaration, there are several portions of the document with which our government has grave concerns,” Strahl said on March 12.

“The problem is that the member from the New Democratic Party is asking the House to take an aspirational, non-legally binding document and enshrine it in Canadian law.”

Citing “practical concerns,” Strahl called Saganash’s proposal “simply impossible to support in view of Canada’s existing legal and constitutional framework.” He noted the government to “have made more strides in this than any government in Canadian history.”

In September, the United Nations in New York hosted the first World Conference on Indigenous Peoples. Countries voted to adopt a non-legally binding document renewing commitments to the protection of the rights of indigenous people outlined in the 2007 [declaration](#).

Canada was the [only country](#) to raise its objections on the landmark document.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/07/romeo-saganash-indigenous-rights_n_7234856.html

Aboriginal Sports

2 gold for Team Sask at National Aboriginal Hockey Championships

By [Thomas Piller](#) Associate Technical Producer Global News, May 5, 2015 1:55 pm

HALIFAX, N.S. – Saskatchewan teams competing at the National Aboriginal Hockey Championships (NAHC) are bring home gold. The 14th annual tournament for under-18 players took place in Halifax, N.S. last week.

At the gold medal matches on Saturday, the girls won 3-2 against Team Ontario while the boys defeated Team Alberta 4-3 in overtime.

Both teams also won gold in 2014. The aboriginal players come from all across the province and are between the ages of 13 and 17.

Summer Roberts, of Saskatchewan, won the tournament's MVP for female goaltender and the captain of the boys team, Curtis Roach, was named MVP defenceman.

"I see that it gives the girls a sense of belonging and a chance to make lifetime friends," said Roberts.

The first NAHC were held in 2002.

Direct Link: <http://globalnews.ca/news/1980541/2-gold-for-team-sask-at-national-aboriginal-hockey-championships/>

Energy, the Environment & Natural Resources

NDP's Hanson: Yukon gov't seeks First Nations reconciliation to frack

Premier Pasloski says reconciliation with Kaska to address past issues, include in development benefits

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 05, 2015 8:44 AM CT Last Updated: May 05, 2015 8:44 AM CT



Yukon NDP Leader Liz Hanson suggested yesterday in the legislative assembly that the government's reconciliation efforts with Kaska First Nations are centred around receiving their permission for fracking operations. (CBC)

The Yukon government's motives to reach a reconciliation agreement with Kaska First Nations are being called into question, with the opposition party leader suggesting the government may have an ulterior intention.

The government has been in talks with the two Kaska First Nations in the territory — the Liard First Nation and Ross River Dena Council — in attempts at reaching a 'reconciliation agreement.'

Yukon NDP leader Liz Hanson pressed Premier Darrell Pasloski on the plan yesterday in the legislative assembly, suggesting that his efforts were steeped in a desire to extract natural resources.

"It is clear the Yukon Party wants to frack southeast Yukon," she said, "and it needs Kaska leadership to support this agenda. Is the reconciliation agreement the premier's way to seek the green light to frack southeast Yukon?"

[Hanson previously criticized Pasloski](#) for his reaction to the news the Kaska First Nations planned to pass their own resource law. Pasloski said the Kaska couldn't pass any law because they're still under the Indian Act.

Pasloski didn't exactly refute the suggestion in his reply, stating that his government's attempts at reconciliation were to "address issues that have existed in the past, and to ensure that those First Nations are able to benefit in economic development within their traditional territory."

[Kaska protestors joined an anti-fracking demonstration](#) yesterday in Whitehorse, complaining not only about the government's lack of consultation on the controversial practice, but their First Nation's leadership, as well.

Pasloski also said he'd prefer the Kaska sign a final land claim agreement, however, without one he said a reconciliation agreement will help the First Nations benefit from economic development.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ndp-s-hanson-yukon-gov-t-seeks-first-nations-reconciliation-to-frack-1.3061447>

Liard First Nation criticized by anti-fracking protesters

Kaska protesters say First Nation has not consulted its members, fear 'backroom deal'

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 04, 2015 6:40 PM CT Last Updated: May 04, 2015 6:40 PM CT

A group of Kaska protesters joined a small demonstration against fracking today in Whitehorse.

Kaska protesters complained of a lack of consultation — not only from the Yukon government but also their First Nation's leadership.

Alfred Chief, a member of the Liard First Nation, read a letter addressed to the Premier from George Morgan, who was until last year the Executive Director of the Liard First Nation. Morgan's letter was written on behalf of a group called Kaska Concerned about Land Protection and Good Government.

"We remind the Premier that aboriginal rights are a collective right not held by our titular leadership," he said.

"Fracking cannot proceed in the traditional territory of the Kaska unless there is widespread community support. We can assure you if you are planning a backroom deal with our current leadership — we have not been consulted or accommodated by them either."

'The water here is so precious,' said Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians. Barlow said she was there 'in solidarity' with First Nations. (Paul Tukker / CBC)

Daniel Morris, chief of the Liard First Nation, could not be reached for comment.

Neither the chief or any other official representative of the Liard First Nation attended [a public consultation held on fracking in the community of Watson Lake in June 2014](#).

LFN chief 'hasn't come forward' with a position

Alfred Chief says Morris — who has not talked with CBC since being elected in 2013 — has not held meetings with LFN members to discuss fracking.

"I really don't know what his issue," Chief said. "He hasn't come forward saying he's for or against it. I'm thinking he's for it."

Rose Caesar of the Liard First Nation echoed that view. "I am really requesting that we be consulted properly," she said.

Monday's demonstration also included Maude Barlow of the Council of Canadians. She urged Yukoners to protect their water by rejecting any plans for fracking.

"I'm here in solidarity," Barlow told the demonstrators. "The Yukon has not yet started this process. I beg you — don't start it. The water here is so precious."

The Yukon government has [said it will permit fracking](#) only in the Liard River basin, and only with the support of affected first nations. The Liard River basin falls within the traditional territory of the Liard First Nation.

The Liard First Nation does not have a settled land claim. It is currently under third-party management to deal with outstanding debts, is being audited by the federal government and has failed to meet requirements of the federal First Nations Transparency Act.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/liard-first-nation-criticized-by-anti-fracking-protesters-1.3060926>

First Nations, the law and the importance of listening

And why asking the right questions will always produce better answers

By Max Fawcett
May 06, 2015

You know that old saying that it's better to ask for forgiveness than permission? Well, when it comes to the relationship between industry and First Nations, it really couldn't be much further from the truth. Indeed, doing business by asking for forgiveness rather than permission is a pretty good way to ensure that you'll get neither, and that's particularly true in an environment where First Nations are more willing than ever to stand up for their rights – and against the wrongs they believe have been done to them.

The courts are pretty clearly on their side, too. In April, the British Columbia Court of Appeal ruled in favor of the Saik'uz and Stellat'en First Nations in a case that further solidified the primacy of aboriginal title. The two nations alleged that Rio Tinto Alcan's Kenney Dam, which was built in the 1950s, had damaged the Nechako River system and the fisheries that depended on it. But a lower court had rejected their case against the aluminum giant on the basis that they first had to establish their title before they could sue Rio Tinto Alcan for breaching it. That lower court's decision was overturned, the latest in a string of verdicts — the most recent, and most important, being last year's Tsilhqot'in decision — that have clarified the rights that aboriginals have over their land.

Those rights aren't news to the majority of those who work in the energy sector, and it's certainly not news to anyone whose day-to-day responsibilities involve interacting with aboriginal groups. It's also not a deathblow to the energy sector's desire to see oil and gas exported off the west coast of British Columbia. Most First Nations are willing to do business under the right conditions. There is rarely the kind of opposition that you might find in, say, Vancouver, where willful ignorance doesn't come with the kinds of costs attached to it that it probably should. First Nations communities need jobs, economic development and all the other benefits that come with resource extraction. But they've served notice that those aren't going to be the products of a relationship where industry acts first and asks questions later. They expect to be full partners in the process, and that means having the right to say no as well as yes.

I think this means a new outlook on how to get projects – and, yes, pipelines – built in Canada is needed. Yes, the courts have made it clear that a pipeline won't get built without the full and informed consent of every First Nation that's affected along any potential route. But rather than looking at those communities as obstacles to be overcome, the energy sector should treat them as business partners in waiting. And if it asks the right questions, it might just get the answer it's been looking for all along.

Direct Link: <http://www.albertaoilmagazine.com/2015/05/first-things-first/>

Manitoba First Nation says hydro development occurring without proper benefits

Steve Lambert The Canadian Press

Posted: May 07, 2015 1:08 PM CT

Last Updated: May 07, 2015 5:06 PM CT

A northern Manitoba First Nation said Thursday it may not get its fair share of benefits from a massive transmission line being built by the province's energy utility, and hinted at trying to delay the megaproject.

"There have been some discussions ... but to no satisfaction of the duty to consult and accommodate, and in that respect, to maximize opportunity within our traditional territory," said Chief Michael Constant of the Opaskwayak Cree Nation.



The Opaskwayak Cree Nation says ongoing Manitoba Hydro development on its land is happening without properly compensating the First Nation. (CBC)

"I am officially declaring stoppage of related works and negotiations until such time as our outstanding issues are addressed."

Opaskwayak, near The Pas, has some 5,800 members. Its traditional lands will be crossed by about 165 kilometres of the planned Bipole Three transmission line, a \$4 billion project that is to bring power from northern generating stations to homes and businesses in the south.

Manitoba Hydro has been in discussions with all First Nations along the line route since 2008 about economic and environmental impacts of the project. A spokesman said Thursday talks with Opaskwayak appeared to be going well.

"I know that (Opaskwayak) did partner with a Korea-based firm to submit a pre-qualification bid on construction, so there have been opportunities," Scott Powell said.

"There are a number of First Nations along the route and a number of them have secured contracts," he added, pointing to a recent bid by the Pine Creek First Nation on land-clearing as an example.

Manitoba Hydro aims to get the transmission line up and running by 2018. It originally planned to run a shorter, direct line down the east side of Lake Winnipeg. But due in part to fears that First Nations in the area would fight the project in court, the NDP government ordered Hydro to reroute the line far to the west — almost to the Saskatchewan boundary — where it will then have to loop southward and back east.

Grand Chief Derek Nepinak of the Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs said contracts are starting to be awarded before First Nations communities are being assured that they will get proper economic benefits.

"We think the jobs that should be created out of this \$4 billion opportunity should stay here at home. And most importantly, they should be designed to help our communities participate," Nepinak said.

"If they want to see the project go ahead, and if they don't want to see continuing escalating costs ... then they'd better get to the table with indigenous communities."

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/m/touch/canada/manitoba/story/1.3065399>

B.C. First Nations band rejects LNG plant tied to billion-dollar offer in first voting

Proposed site unsuitable, councillor says

By Geordon Omand, THE CANADIAN PRESS May 7, 2015



An LNG export terminal is planned for Lelu Island, near Prince Rupert, but a local First Nations band has initially rejected the proposed site near the mouth of the Skeena River.

VANCOUVER — The first of three votes on a natural gas benefit offer worth over \$1 billion has been unanimously rejected by a First Nation on British Columbia's northwest coast.

All of the more than 180 eligible voters at a meeting in Port Simpson stood up to oppose the plan to build a liquefied-natural-gas pipeline and terminal in their territory, said Lax Kw'alaams band member Malcolm Sampson.

Pacific NorthWest LNG, which is mostly owned by Malaysia-based oil and gas giant Petronas, has applied to build an export terminal on Lelu Island, just south of Prince Rupert at the head of the Skeena River.

Residents have raised concerns over the project's environmental impact, citing the site's problematic location and the threat it poses to the watershed.

"Why would you build an LNG plant right at the mouth of the Skeena River?" said Sampson, who spoke at Tuesday's meeting. "There of all places."

Sampson said the \$1.15-billion offer in benefits over 40 years was not discussed at all during the meeting, which took place in a school gym so packed that some band members had to stand outside.

"Too much was at stake to wipe out a whole river," said the father of eight and grandfather of 20. He described the atmosphere at the meeting, where both proponents and the band council made presentations, as "very tense."

Luanne Roth of the T. Buck Suzuki Foundation said an estimated 60 per cent of the Skeena estuary's eel grass is located immediately off Lelu Island, which she described as critical salmon habitat.

"It's in the worst place they could have chosen in the whole north coast," she said of the proposed LNG site.

Information posted on the band's website notes the proposal would provide an initial \$27.8 million. Annual payments would then begin at nearly \$13 million and end with \$50.5 million in the 40th year.

The deal would provide 2,200 hectares of land in the Prince Rupert harbour area, worth about \$108 million, and would promise jobs for qualified Tsimshian workers.

Further information on the site says that in exchange, Lelu Island and its traditional plants and medicines would be off limits to Lax Kw'alaams members. As many as 431 culturally modified trees could be destroyed if the deal goes ahead, it adds.

About 120 kilometres of the pipeline would rest on the seabed, which, the document says, could negatively impact fish and their habitat, alter access to traditional fishing grounds and contaminate seafood through dredging.

The remaining members of the 3,700-strong band will have an opportunity to vote following two information sessions in Prince Rupert and Vancouver over the coming week.

Lax Kw'alaams Mayor Garry Reece said the band council would not comment on the outcome of the initial vote until members living outside of Port Simpson have had an opportunity to cast their ballots.

Pacific NorthWest LNG president Michael Culbert declined comment but thanked the Lax Kw'alaams council for the invitation to present to the community.

"Out of respect to the ongoing process overseen by mayor and council, it is premature and improper to comment further," Culbert said an email.

Port Simpson resident Donnie Wesley, who voted no on Tuesday, said his people wanted to send a clear message to the provincial and federal governments that his community takes environmental issues seriously.

"It was a proud moment for our people," said the lifelong fisherman. "We stood our ground."

Direct Link:

<http://www.theprovince.com/business/energy/first+three+votes+First+Nations+band+rejects+plant+tied/11034553/story.html>

Land Claims & Treaty Rights

Letter: Questions for party leaders from Metis leaders

Letter, Shirley Tremblay, Jumbo Fraser, Ron Quintal, Gail Gallupe

Thursday, April 30, 2015 3:34:57 MDT PM



Canoes with the McMurray Metis travel down the Athabasca River near Poplar Point during a week-long trip from Fort McKay to Fort Chipewyan last summer. Tara Joly/Supplied Photo

Dear Editor,

Northeastern Alberta is home to a large aboriginal population. Yet during this election there has been very little said by Party leaders and candidates about Aboriginal rights. Even locally where there are four large Métis communities and five First Nation communities our concerns are not being discussed.

Therefore the Métis communities of Conklin, Fort Chipewyan, Fort McKay and Fort McMurray wanted to take the opportunity to ask each of the candidates the following four questions. We will make the answers available to our members online.

1. Currently the Alberta Government does not mandate industry to consult with Métis communities concerning projects that affect them despite their constitutional obligation to do so. Does your party support a Métis consultation policy and what concrete steps would you take to implement one?
2. Acquiring Crown land has been increasingly difficult for rural hamlets resulting in a housing shortage. Do you support land release for rural aboriginal communities?
3. Rural hamlets do not have adequate health care and police protection. What would your government do to help increase access to health care and improve police protection?
4. No one can deny that there are cumulative impacts to aboriginal rights in Northeastern Alberta. What would your government do to address the impacts that industrial development is having on aboriginal communities.

The voters in the aboriginal communities of Wood Buffalo need to know the answers to these questions before they vote. The next government has an obligation to address these concerns and your answers will help determine who our members choose to support.

Signed,

Shirley Tremblay, President, Conklin Métis Local 193

Jumbo Fraser, President, Fort Chipewyan Métis Local 125

Ron Quintal, President, McKay Métis Community

Gail Gallupe, President, McMurray Métis

Direct Link: <http://www.fortmcmurraytoday.com/2015/04/30/letter-questions-for-party-leaders-from-metis-leaders>

Casino mine proposal still lacks info, say Yukon gov't, First Nations

Yukon board already sent earlier project proposal back for more work

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 01, 2015 7:00 AM CT Last Updated: May 01, 2015 7:08 AM CT



The Casino mine property, 380 kilometers northwest of Whitehorse. Western Copper and Gold says if the mine is approved, it could have a life of 22 years and employ up to 1000 people. (Western Copper and Gold)

Yukon First Nations and several territorial government departments want to send the Casino mine project proposal back for more work, saying it's still missing key information about the mine's potential impacts and the company's plans to mitigate damage.

The Casino Mining Corporation, a wholly-owned subsidiary of Western Copper and Gold, is planning to build what would be the Yukon's biggest mine, about 400 kilometres northwest of Whitehorse.

If the mine is approved, the company says it could produce more than 400,000 ounces of gold annually and more than 200 million pounds of copper. It says the mine could employ up to 1,000 people at peak construction, and have a life of about 22 years.

The Yukon Environmental and Socio-economic Assessment Board (YESAB) already sent an earlier version of the company's project proposal back, saying it was inadequate and lacked key information. The Casino Mining Corp. then submitted a revised proposal featuring additional information.

However, several Yukon First Nations have written to the board, saying key details are still lacking. The Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nation says the company lacks a "comprehensive reclamation and closure plan," or a water treatment plan for the mine.



The Casino mine project would be bigger than any existing mine in the Yukon. (CasinoMining.com)

"The size of the Casino Mine is unprecedented in the Yukon, and Yukon Government guidelines to address a project of this magnitude do not yet exist," the First Nation says in its submission to the board.

Several Yukon government departments also indicated to YESAB that more detail is needed, to understand how the mine may affect things such as water quality, heritage resources, caribou herds, and the health and safety of workers.

The board is set to make a decision by May 15. If it decides the mine proposal is adequate, the project moves on to the public screening phase of assessment. The board can also ask the company again to submit additional information.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/casino-mine-proposal-still-lacks-info-say-yukon-gov-t-first-nations-1.3056440>

Prince Rupert First Nations Band Offered \$1 Billion To Support LNG Project

CP | By The Canadian Press

Posted: 05/01/2015 7:04 pm EDT Updated: 37 minutes ago



PRINCE RUPERT, B.C. - A \$1.15-billion benefits' package is being offered to a First Nation on British Columbia's northwest coast in a bid to win support for a proposed liquefied-natural-gas terminal and pipeline.

Details of the offer to the Lax Kw'alaams from the provincial government and project owners, including Malaysia's Petronas, were published on the band's website.

The deal is not the only one being pursued with aboriginals in advance of regulatory approval.

One week ago, TransCanada (TSX:TRP), the company that plans to build the 950-kilometre pipeline from near Hudson's Hope in northeastern B.C. to Prince Rupert on the coast, announced a deal with the Kitselas First Nation.

"Our government has been very clear that for too long First Nations have been excluded from economic development and that needs to change," said the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation in an email on Friday.

An information bulletin published on the Lax Kw'alaams' website notes the proposal includes \$27.8 million for signing and preliminary agreements, construction and startup projects.

Annual payments would start at nearly \$13 million and end with \$50.5 million in year 40, for a total of just over \$1 billion, it adds.

The band would receive 2,200 hectares of land, worth about \$108 million, in the Prince Rupert harbour area, as well as "additional lands of interest."

Targeted funds of nearly \$29 million would cover road paving, compensation for fisheries, scholarships and training programs.

The deal also promises vacant jobs in the "commercial operations phase" to every Tsimshian person who has completed a training program, meets "ordinary job requirements," and is "otherwise qualified for the job."

Band leaders are asking members to vote on the projects and the benefits package through a show of hands during meetings in Lax Kw'alaams, Prince Rupert and Vancouver.

"The province is working with more than 40 First Nations to discuss benefits, concerns and the engagement process on proposed natural-gas pipelines and LNG-related infrastructure within their traditional territory," said the Ministry of Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation. "Proponents are also engaging with First Nations through similar discussions."

The ministry said it has, to date, concluded talks with 27 First Nations on 54 agreements on natural gas pipelines, and it expects more, although the details will vary.

Pacific NorthWest LNG, a majority of which is owned by Petronas, plans to build an export terminal on Lelu Island, near Prince Rupert.

"If the project is constructed, Lelu Island will be effectively off bounds to Lax Kw'alaams' members as the island will be largely cleared," states a community backgrounder.

Community members won't be able to harvest traditional plants and medicines, and as many as 431 culturally modified trees could be destroyed, the document adds.

About 120 kilometres of the pipeline would rest on the seabed, which, the document states, could negatively impact fish and their habitat, alter access to traditional fishing grounds and contaminate seafood through dredging.

TransCanada said Friday it expects B.C.'s oil and gas commission to decide soon on two pipeline projects the company wants to build.

Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development Canada reports the Lax Kw'alaams have a total population of 3,351 people, of which 817 live on reserve.

— by Keven Drews in Vancouver

Note to readers: This is a corrected story. A previous story said band leaders will ask members to support the projects. In fact, band leaders are asking members to vote on the projects through a show of hands.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2015/05/01/billion-dollar-lng-deal-p_n_7192862.html

Ottawa to pay Nunavut Inuit \$255M in settlement

NTI to spend \$175 million on initiatives related to education and training, invest \$80 million

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 04, 2015 11:15 AM CT Last Updated: May 04, 2015 1:34 PM CT



Nunavut leaders pose with Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, front left, in Iqaluit May 4. Next to Valcourt is NTI President Cathy Towtongie and Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna. In back is Qikiqtani Inuit Association President PJ Akeegok, Education Minister Paul Quassa, Nunavut MP Leona Aglukkaq, Finance Minister Keith Peterson and NTI vice-president James Eetoolook. (Jordan Konek/CBC)

The Government of Canada will pay Nunavut Inuit about \$255 million in an out-of-court settlement that ends a 9-year-old legal dispute.

Most of that money will be used to fund training for Inuit to enter the territory's civil service.

"Once their skills are developed, the Government of Nunavut will have an administration that has an Inuit workforce that's competent, capable," said Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. President Cathy Towtongie.

Nunavut has never come close to the same percentage of Inuit in government jobs as they are in the general population, as was promised in Article 23 of the land claim. While Inuit make up about 85 per cent of the territory's population, Inuit only make up about half of the government workforce.

NTI, which oversees the land claim, argued that the disparity was caused by ongoing underfunding of Inuit education.



Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt, left, Nunavut Tunngavik President Cathy Towtongie, and Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna. (Elyse Skura/CBC)

A conciliator agreed, saying in 2005 that Ottawa should spend another \$20 million a year on Inuit education.

When Ottawa didn't follow the conciliator's report, NTI filed the lawsuit, claiming \$1 billion in damages. That was based on wages the group said the Inuit could have earned from their share of government jobs if they'd been educated well enough to fill them.

Instead, NTI settled for \$256 million.

\$175M for education, training

At a gathering in Iqaluit this morning, Nunavut Tunngavik officials said they would spend \$175 million on initiatives related to education and training through a newly created Nunavut Inuit Training Corporation, that will be jointly run with the Nunavut government.

NTI will invest the remaining \$80.5 million.

Within the next six years, an independent review will occur to see that Article 23 is being implemented.

The settlement also includes an extra \$50 million for eight years of training initiatives.

Minister of Aboriginal Affairs Bernard Valcourt and Nunavut Premier Peter Taptuna were also present to sign the deal in Iqaluit this morning.

They called it a historic day — one that renews the relationship between Inuit and the rest of Canada.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/ottawa-to-pay-nunavut-inuit-255m-in-settlement-1.3057973>

First Nations group Lax Kw'alaams set to vote on \$1.1-billion question

JUSTINE HUNTER

VICTORIA — The Globe and Mail

Published Sunday, May. 03 2015, 10:53 PM EDT

Last updated Sunday, May. 03 2015, 10:55 PM EDT

The Lax Kw'alaams Band in Prince Rupert is making headlines after presenting its 3,600 members last week with an offer worth more than \$1.1-billion, in exchange for their consent to the construction of a liquefied natural gas terminal within their traditional territories.

It's likely not the last proposed deal on that scale: The Haisla First Nation in Kitimat, for example, expects no less should the LNG Canada facility go ahead in its backyard.

The package on offer to the Lax Kw'alaams and the other Tsimshian nations in the region where the Pacific Northwest LNG facility is proposed establishes the new benchmark for sharing the wealth of resource development with First Nations. It also presents a challenge to those members who will be making these decisions.

"It bothers me that so much money is being flashed around to bring First Nations on board for developments that are risky," says Judith Sayers, a former chief of the Hupacasath First Nation in Port Alberni. She's not anti-development – she's in the Canadian Aboriginal Business Hall of Fame – but she is skeptical about the environmental trade-offs involved.

The LNG offers are big – possibly unprecedented – because the potential scale of development is huge.

Only a handful of Coastal First Nations would likely stand to benefit in such a significant way – and only if those developments end up in commercial production. There are still regulatory hurdles ahead and no final investment decisions have been reached.

The Lax Kw'alaams deal is being heralded as a game changer, however, because it represents a large and multigenerational stake in the resource development sector being offered to a First Nations community where no treaty exists.

The province, desperately keen to secure an LNG industry to meet its 2013 election campaign promises, has agreed to contribute as well, in the form of a transfer of Crown land worth more than \$100-million.

The value of this one-off deal, if the project is ever built, is more than the band would likely stand to benefit from achieving a treaty, and doesn't preclude further economic development deals.

The Lax Kw'alaams will get to vote in a series of meetings held in three communities between May 4 and 12, by a show of hands.

Rejection would be a setback for both the company and the province, and it would also be a strong message to the investment community: If \$1.1-billion and the promise of jobs to a community of 3,600 isn't enough, what is the price of consent in B.C.?

Details, however, will count. There is no explanation of how the benefits would be distributed in the two-page proposal shared with band members. Although the value of the package works out to roughly \$320,000 a person over the life of the 40-year deal, the band council has not yet explained how those dollars will flow.

Dr. Sayers, an adjunct professor of business at the University of Victoria, hopes band members will take a careful look at the fine print.

"For most First Nations communities, a billion dollars is huge," she said. That's money that can transform a community: She noted the youth suicide rate in the Lax Kw'alaams community dropped appreciably after the installation of a new recreation centre and swimming pool.

"Those are some of the things that money can bring. But you have to ask, can you keep your traditions, your culture against what development brings? What it would look like postdevelopment – is that the world you want your great-grandchildren to live in?"

With so little progress at the treaty table, these kinds of economic deals are increasingly the default path toward reconciliation with First Nations in B.C. It is an imperfect solution to solving the land question in a province where unsettled aboriginal title claims dominate. But it is progress, at least, that the Lax Kw'alaams have a choice.

Direct Link: <http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/british-columbia/first-nations-group-lax-kwalaams-set-to-vote-on-11-billion-question/article24235482/>

Dehcho leaders vote to ban fracking in traditional territory

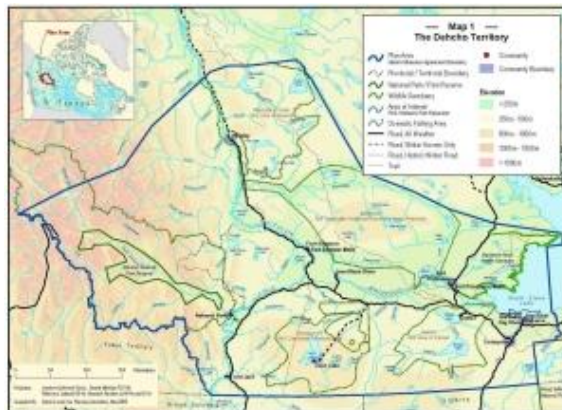
Dene and Métis leaders in Dehcho passed resolution to ban fracking on 215,000 km territory last week

[CBC News](#) Posted: May 06, 2015 7:03 AM CT Last Updated: May 06, 2015 9:27 AM CT



Dehcho First Nations Grand Chief Herb Norwegian says Dene and Metis leaders took a 'strong stand' against fracking by passing a resolution to ban the practice in their traditional territory. (CBC)

Dene and Métis leaders in the Northwest Territories' Dehcho region have voted to ban fracking on their traditional lands, passing a resolution during a meeting last week.



The traditional territory of the Dehcho First Nations, outlined in blue, spans 215,000 square kilometres. (Dehcho First Nations)

The resolution states that fracking can not happen within the 215,000 square kilometre traditional territory of the Dehcho, which stretches from the west point of Great Slave Lake through the Nahanni National Park Reserve near the Yukon border, and as far north as Wrigley.

Grand Chief Herb Norwegian says the territorial government never consulted with the Dehcho while it was drafting its [proposed hydraulic fracturing regulations](#), adding that people cried out against the practice at a [recent public meeting in Fort Simpson](#).

"Total rejection of everything about it," said Norwegian of the mood at the meeting. "Bring the 'f-word' to the forefront, and of course people objected to it.

"And the leaders had a discussion about that. And they took a very strong stand."

The Dehcho First Nations are still negotiating their land claim with the territorial government. In March, Norwegian accused the government of giving the group of Dene and Métis nations an ultimatum, [saying they were asking them to accept a land claim settlement even though the government hadn't actually negotiated anything with them.](#)

The two groups [went back to the table](#) to resolve the impasse in late April.

Direct Link: <http://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/north/dehcho-leaders-vote-to-ban-fracking-in-traditional-territory-1.3063011>

Special Topic: Missing & Murdered Indigenous Women

Closed Door Meeting Held to Plan Grassroots Action on Murdered and Missing Indigenous Women

[National News](#) | May 2, 2015 by [Brandi Morin](#) |



Brandi Morin

APTN National News

EDMONTON — An invitation only meeting was held Friday by grassroots organizers who are planning a strategy to tackle the issue of missing and murdered Indigenous women.

The round-table discussion was spearheaded by Treaty 6 Grand Chief Bernice Martial who made headlines last month when she called out Aboriginal Affairs Minister Bernard Valcourt.

In March, [Valcourt said during a private meeting in Calgary](#) that unreleased RCMP data shows Indigenous men were responsible for 70 per cent of murdered Indigenous women cases, according to two chiefs who were at the meeting.

Soon after chiefs from northern Alberta called for Valcourt's resignation.

First Nations leaders felt the government was shifting the blame of the issue and skirting around taking action.

[An RCMP project](#) aimed at tallying the number of missing and murdered Indigenous women uncovered nearly 1,200 cases of murdered and missing Indigenous women.

But despite the startling numbers, the Harper government has rejected calls for a national inquiry to delve into the issue. In one report, Prime Minister Stephen Harper said that it wasn't on the government's radar.

Martial decided to take it to the next level- to organize action from a grassroots perspective.

"The way I'm thinking right now is that I have to have a different approach," said Martial following the meeting today. "By empowering our people and empowering our communities to talk more about this. I'm so thankful that we're here today. I know for sure we're going to go forward and create a better tomorrow."

Several Indigenous leaders attended the meeting including Pam Palmater, professor at Ryerson University, Assembly of Manitoba Chiefs Grand Chief Derek Nepinak, the former president of the Native Women's Association of Canada Beverly Jacobs and Treaty 8 Grand Chief Steve Courtorielle who was also present at the Calgary meeting with Valcourt.

Other community leaders and organizations also contributed to the discussion on how to address the crisis.

Palmater said the government is showing no intentions of taking action on the matter which leaves people no choice but to act.

"As sovereign people, as the ones most responsible for our women and girls, we're going to take action," said Palmater. "We're done with Canada's neglect, we're done with Canada's racism and we're really going to take matters into our own hands- work collectively with other countries, the United Nations and our other allies to end this violence against our women and girls."

Nepinak views Treaty 6 as a leader in advancing the discussions of murdered and missing Indigenous women on a national level. And he too believes the answers lie within the Aboriginal community.

“We can’t be knocking on the doors of the federal government asking them to listen to us right now,” said Nepinak. “We recognize we’re working with a government that is turning a blind eye to the tragedy’s that are unfolding.”

Martial said that AFN National Chief Perry Bellegarde gave his blessing to the meeting but was unable to attend.

Right now they are at the beginning stages of forming an action plan and Martial said it’s about building relationships with those involved.

Another meeting is scheduled to happen sometime within the next six months.

Going forward Martial said she will continue to push for solutions to be found because she said the cries of the motherless children left behind motivates her to keep fighting for justice.

And so that the generations to come won’t have to carry this burden. “I don’t think about myself I think about the future generations to come- that they will have a good life,” said Martial.

Direct Link: <http://aptn.ca/news/2015/05/02/closed-door-meeting-held-plan-grassroots-action-murdered-missing-indigenous-women/>

Special Topic: Residential Schools

Photos: After years of forced assimilation, Canada’s indigenous people begin to heal

[Daniella Zalcman](#)

May 4, 2015



Generations of Canada's First Nations forgot who they were. (Daniella Zalcman/PulitzerCenter)

Last autumn, I spent a month documenting Canada's indigenous population. Originally, the story was supposed to examine HIV in First Nations communities. Canada's prevalence rates [are 5 to 10 times higher](#) than in comparable indigenous populations in Australia, New Zealand, or the United States, and the number of Aboriginal Canadians living with [HIV increased by 24% between 2005 and 2010](#).

In a country that has one of the best healthcare systems in the world and pioneered some of the most progressive harm reduction strategies in existence, these numbers make no sense. To put them into context, [a 2012 UNAIDS study](#) shows that the number of new HIV infections in Sub-Saharan Africa decreased by 25 percent between 2001 and 2011.

Once I arrived and began to talk to subjects, a clear pattern emerged. Almost every indigenous person I met had ties to Canada's Indian Residential School system—a [network of federally run](#), Christian boarding schools that were meant to assimilate young indigenous students into western Canadian culture. Until the last school closed in 1996, Indian Agents from the Department of Indian Affairs would forcibly take children from their reserves as young as two or three years old and send them to these places, where they were punished for speaking their native languages or observing any indigenous traditions. There are countless stories of sexual and physical abuse occurring as well, and in some extreme instances children endured medical experimentation and sterilization.



A photo of Doreen Bellaire's mother, Delina Commana (center), who attended a residential school in Spanish, Ontario for ten years. To protect her own family from ever having to go through the same experience, Delina left her reserve and moved into town to raise her children, never even telling them that they were First Nations. It wasn't until decades later that Doreen found out about her culture and her heritage. (Daniella Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)

As a result, generations of Canada's First Nations forgot who they were. Languages died out, sacred ceremonies were simultaneously criminalized and suppressed by the Canadian government. "‘You stupid Indian’ were the first English words I ever learned," First Nations member Tom Janvier told me. He was sent to residential school as a three-year-old, where he was bullied, beaten, and sexually molested. "It became self-fulfilling. My identity was held against me."

As a way to cope, or to forget, or simply because any notion of self-esteem or self worth had been obliterated with their identities, a disproportionate number of First Nations people began to engage in high-risk behavior—which perhaps explains the elevated rates of HIV transmitted through injected drug use and unsafe sex.

And yet, in spite of this system of institutionalized oppression, First Nations communities are finally beginning to recover. For the first time in decades, children are being brought up speaking Ojibwe and Cree and Blackfoot again. Potlatches and sun dances and sweat lodges have returned. As revealed in these images, made possible through a grant through [The Pulitzer Center on Crisis Reporting](#), there is a new revitalization of First Nations culture occurring. Undeniably linked to the collective healing process, these people, who have endured so much, are reclaiming their voice in Canada.



Eleanor Kay walks to her dealer's house in North Central, Regina. Ellie is a sex worker and an active injecting drug user, and was diagnosed with HIV in 2008. She probably contracted the virus from an ex-boyfriend who was routinely unfaithful to her and didn't disclose his status — he died in 2010, with Ellie in her aunt's basement, after they used together. Ellie is fiercely responsible about her health — she goes to a free needle exchange almost every day to get clean syringes for herself and her family, and frequently is responsible for looking after her uncles and brother and cousins when they're under the influence. (Daniella Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)



Ellie breaks down and hugs one of her best friends, Janet, thanking her for being one of the few people who doesn't judge her for being HIV positive. Even though Ellie is incredibly conscientious when it comes to safe injection drug use, she's frequently shunned and assaulted because of her status. (Daniella Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)



Archie Weenie runs a sweat lodge on the north end of Regina, where First Nations people gather once a week to take part in the intense spiritual ritual. Participants gather in a dome-shaped hut (the lodge) around rocks that have been heated in a sacred fire (center) and are doused in water to create steam. During the sweat, people will pray, sing, drum, and share their stories. There are a few people struggling with substance addiction who regularly come to Archie's lodge. (Daniella Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)



Rodney Little Mustache's daily dose of antiretroviral medications. Rodney was an injecting drug user and worked in the sex trade when he lived in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, a neighborhood famous for hard drug use. His HIV diagnosis was a wake up call that he had to drastically change his lifestyle if he wanted to survive. This fall, Rodney began his first semester at the University of British Columbia. (Daniella Zalcmán/Pulitzer Center)



A drum circle sings at an Alderville First Nation event. Drumming is a deeply significant part of First Nations culture — the beat is thought to represent the pulse of Mother Nature, and many of the songs tell old folk stories and legends. (Daniella Zalcmán/Pulitzer Center)



John Mattson brings a smudge stick through a group of dancers about to perform at the Alderville First Nation drum social. Alderville, a reserve about an hour east of Toronto, is home to about 300 Ojibwe people. (Daniella Zalcmán/Pulitzer Center)



Dianne Campbell is HIV positive and still fights substance abuse, but is managing her addictions and regularly works as a peer mentor in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, where she lives. As a three year old Dianne was adopted by white parents and grew up going to French immersion school and learning piano. By 16, she was placed into foster care and soon after ran away, turning to alcohol and drugs once she began living on the street. She had a son who was taken away from her by Children's Aid, who is now 26 years old and in jail.(Danielle Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)



Tom Janvier, a two-spirited, HIV positive Dene man, in his Vancouver apartment. Tom went to residential school for three years before he told his parents he would kill himself if they made him return. While there, he rebelled by speaking his language and practicing his culture, even though he was routinely punished for disobeying the rules.(Daniella Zalcman/Pulitzer Center)

Direct Link: <http://qz.com/395769/photos-after-years-of-forced-assimilation-canadas-indigenous-people-begin-to-heal/>

Special Topic: International Indigenous Populations

Senate Republicans Kill Native American Mascot Bill

By [Michael Roberts](#)

Thursday, April 30, 2015 | 4 days ago



Statues celebrating the Lamar Savages, located on Savage Avenue, the road to the high school. Additional images, a video and more below.

[Google Maps](#)

Update: In March, we told you about a bill that would have created a committee to determine if Native American mascots at schools were offensive and instituted a \$25,000 per month fine against those that refused to abandon ones that failed to pass the test. See our previous coverage below.

However, the legislation will not become law.

Earlier this month, HB 15-1165, sponsored by Representative Joe Salazar, was approved by the state House by a [33-32 vote](#). Every Democrat save one voted in favor of the measure, while all 32 Republicans responded with nays.

This didn't bode well for the proposal's chances in the Republican-controlled Senate, and that's the way it worked out. Last night, a Senate committee rejected HB 15-1165 by a [3-2 margin](#) that followed the party line: Two Democrats supported it, three Republicans didn't.



Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia.

Photo by Johnny Molfetta

The outcome disappointed Lieutenant Governor Joe Garcia, who chairs the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs. Along with Chairman Manuel Heart of the Ute Mountain Ute Tribe and Chairman Clement Frost, representing the Southern Ute Indian Tribe, Garcia issued a joint statement about the bill's demise. It reads:

“Last night, HB15-1165 ‘Schools’ Use of American Indian Mascots’ bill failed in the Senate State, Veterans, & Military Affairs Committee on a party line vote. We would like to thank Representatives Salazar and Melton and Senator Ulibarri for bringing this legislation forward and, by doing so, providing a forum for an important conversation about the manner in which images and symbols are viewed depending on one’s individual historical and cultural perspective.

"For centuries, American Indian peoples have called Colorado home. From Cortez to Sterling and Trinidad to Craig, numerous tribal nations hunted, gathered, and lived in areas from which, over time, most were removed and forced onto reservations, stripped of their land, language and culture, and, too often, even their lives.

"HB 1165 sparked an important conversation in the Legislature about the use of outdated names and offensive caricatures of American Indian people in many of Colorado's schools. While issues like local control and financial constraints prevailed, it is our hope that this discussion has encouraged communities to have an open and honest dialogue about this issue. Institutions which strive to teach respect and dignity to our next generation should recognize that displays of American Indian warpaint, headdresses and tomahawk chants may be offensive to tribal nations and Native people. Intentionally or not, they often degrade the proud and ongoing legacy of American Indians in Colorado and everywhere throughout the nation.

"Last December, when Governor Hickenlooper apologized to the descendants of the tribes that suffered the atrocity of the Sand Creek Massacre, and a month later, when he gave his State of the State, he said healing begins with an apology. It also takes dialogue and a recognition that we view certain symbols, images and words through our respective historical and cultural perspectives. As we move forward, it is our hope that the Colorado Commission of Indian Affairs will be utilized as a resource to help facilitate that dialogue by connecting schools and communities with Tribes that once called these places home, and may do so still today."

As we noted below, a similar attempt to eliminate offensive Native American school mascots came up short five years ago. The closeness of the 2015 vote suggests the legislation is likely to be introduced again down the line — although its odds of success are likely dependent on whether Democrats are in charge in the senate, the house and the governor's mansion.

Continue for our previous coverage.

Original post, 10:48 a.m. March 24: If Colorado schools want to retain offensive Native American mascots, it could cost them \$25,000 per month under a new bill passed [last night](#) by the Colorado House of Representatives' education committee.



The mascot of Arapahoe High School. Additional images and more below.
CBS4

House Bill 15-1165 is sponsored by Representative Joe Salazar, a Thornton Democrat. We've included the entire document below, but here's an excerpt from the legislation's summary section.

The bill requires each public school that uses an American Indian mascot to either cease using the mascot or request approval for the continued use of the mascot or another American Indian mascot from the subcommittee. If a public school receives notice from the subcommittee that the school's use of an American Indian mascot has been disapproved, the public school shall cease using the mascot on or before the date years following such notice.

For each month in which a public school uses an unapproved American Indian mascot after such date, a fine of \$25,000 shall be paid to the state treasurer by:

- The school district of the offending public school;
- The state charter school institute if the offending school is an institute charter school; or
- The public school itself if the public school is a public institution of higher education.

The bill creates the American Indian mascot fund (fund). A public school whose mascot is disapproved by the subcommittee may apply for a grant of moneys from the fund to pay for new uniforms, new decor, new letterhead, and such other modifications as are necessitated by the public school's change of mascot.

This is hardly a new issue in Colorado, where Native American organizations have decried mascots they see as offensive for many years.

One of the more memorable efforts to draw attention to the subject came in 2002, when an intramural team at the University of Northern Colorado that included Native

Americans (as well as Latinos and Caucasians) dubbed themselves the [Fightin' Whities](#) — and came up with this logo:



Yet Native American mascots remain prevalent, as evidenced by the following collage put together earlier this year by [CPR.org](#).



[CPR.org](#)

By the way, the mascots in question represent the Lamar Savages, the Eaton Reds and the Frederick Warriors (clockwise from upper left).

Such mascots are also commonplace across the country at all levels of sports — and the debate over whether that's acceptable in the 21st Century was invigorated in recent years by the pressure placed on the owners of the Washington Redskins to change the team's name.

Here's a public-service announcement released around the time of 2014 Super Bowl by the National Congress of American Indians that advocates for a switch.

There's no telling at this point whether broader conversations about Native American mascots will provide enough local momentum for Salazar's bill to pass.

As [9News](#) points out, a similar measure was introduced in Colorado five years ago only to be withdrawn.

This time around, the House may be friendlier to the measure, since Democrats represent a majority in the chamber.

The Republican-controlled Senate is likely to provide more serious obstacles, particularly given the expenses that would be associated with forming a committee and providing funding for schools told to make the switch or pony up.

At the very least, however, Salazar's legislation has re-started the conversation and may provide the impetus for schools with mascots like these to seriously consider what kind of message they're sending to their students, no matter their background.

Here's a report about the bill from KRDO-TV broadcast prior to the education committee's vote, followed by the document itself.

Direct Link: <http://www.westword.com/news/senate-republicans-kill-native-american-mascot-bill-6612000>

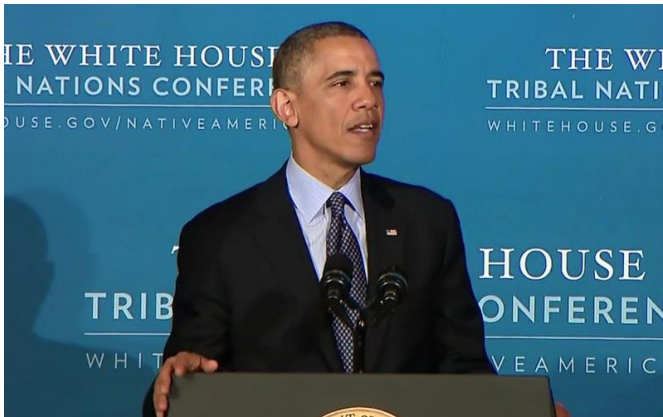
Obama Invests in Native American Youth With White House Tribal Youth Gathering

The [Native American youth](#) Obama met while visiting the Southern Rock Sioux Tribe last June must have made quite an impression. The White House has announced in a press release the first-ever White House Tribal Youth Gathering in Washington, D.C.

The event, to be held on July 9th, is meant to give Native youth the opportunity to interact with senior Administration officials. But it has a larger purpose as well.

Under President Obama, [the first Tribal Nations Conference](#) was held to give tribes a voice in a federal affairs as well as an opportunity to voice their concerns on multiple issues.

At last year's conference, Obama announced the Gen-I Initiative, a push to increase levels of engagement and investments to improve life for Native American youth.



This is part of a concerted effort to bring Native American issues to the forefront and to improve life on the reservation by putting more resources into Native youth.

I think it's a great way to tackle the issue.

The Obamas, more than any other presidential family in our history, are doing great things in terms of Native American outreach. It wasn't too long ago that Michelle, in a speech, [acknowledged the systemic problems facing the tribes.](#)

There is always more to do, of course, and life on the reservation remains a problem that hasn't received the weight and gravity it deserves in our national dialogue.

But this is a step in the right direction.

Read more: <http://bluenationreview.com/obama-invests-in-native-american-youth-with-white-house-tribal-youth-gathering/#ixzz3ZBkr5SEb>

First Nations accepting applications for 'Seeds of Native Health' grants

Published on Thursday, 30 April 2015 18:40

LONGMONT, Colo. –First Nations Development Institute is accepting proposals for its new “Seeds of Native Health” grant program, which is under its Native Agriculture and Food Systems Initiative.

According to a First Nations press release, the purpose of the campaign is to support Native tribes and organizations that are working to eliminate food insecurity, promote access to fresh and healthy foods and provide increased access to nutritional programs aimed at improving the overall nutrition and health of Native people and communities.

The release states the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community created the overarching campaign. First Nations and the SMSC established a partnership to further the goals of the SMSC “Seeds of Native Health” campaign, with First Nations utilizing its NAFSI experience to help achieve these goals.

“Seeds of Native Health” is a comprehensive, national campaign to improve Native American nutrition through capacity building, education and research supported by the SMSC. The campaign builds on localized efforts to solve the problems of Native American nutrition.

First Nations will distribute up to 16 grant awards ranging from \$30,000 to \$40,000 to selected groups and/or projects.

First Nations will accept proposals for programs and/or projects that are focused on strengthening Native food systems and ultimately improving the health and nutrition of Native people and communities.

The release states that desired programs and/or projects will noticeably improve a tribe or Native organization’s effort to increase access to traditional, fresh and healthy foods and increase access to nutrition-related programs aimed at improving the overall nutrition and health of Native people and communities. Selected proposals will increase awareness of and involvement with where the tribe and/or communities’ food comes from, expand knowledge of the linkages of food to Native cultures and/or contribute to tribal economic growth and development with income from entrepreneurially related food ventures.

Organizations eligible to apply include U.S.-based, Native American-controlled nonprofit 501(c)(3) organizations, tribes and tribal departments, tribal organizations and Native American community-based groups that are committed to improving the overall health and well-being of Natives and increasing healthy food access in rural and reservation-based Native communities.

Priority will be given to projects which are aimed at increasing the availability of healthy and locally-produced foods in Native communities; reducing food insecurity; promoting accesses to fresh, healthy and traditional foods and entrepreneurship and/or programs that create systemic change by increasing community control of local food systems.

Grant proposals are due by 5 p.m. MT on May 21. All applicants must fully complete the First Nations online grant application, including the submission of all necessary attachments.

First Nations has supported a variety of projects, including commercial kitchens, farmers’ market development and expansion, farm-to-table programs, food co-ops, mentorship projects and traditional foods projects.

For more information, visit <http://bit.ly/1GrAScN>.

Direct Link: <http://www.nativetimes.com/index.php/news/environment/11461-first-nations-accepting-applications-for-seeds-of-native-health-grants>

‘Without our children, what are we?’ Maine cited for removing Native kids

Truth and Reconciliation Commission says many Wabanaki children placed in foster care because of long-standing racism

May 1, 2015 11:00AM ET
by [Marcelle Hopkins](#)

BANGOR, Maine — A commission has found that Native American children in Maine are five times as likely to be placed in foster care as non-Native children.

The Maine Wabanaki-State Child Welfare Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) presented its preliminary findings and recommendations on Thursday at the first in a series of public forums in Maine.

TRC Executive Director Charlotte Bacon told a group of a few hundred Maine residents gathered at Husson University in Bangor that the higher rate of foster care for Wabanaki children stems, in part, from racism and cultural differences in childrearing.

“One of the things we found is that there are real differences for people who are working inside the state system and people who are Wabanaki around the idea of safety — what constitutes safety, what does it look like,” Bacon said.

The Maine Wabanaki TRC was established in 2013 to document the widespread removal of Native children from their homes and address the collective trauma experienced by tribal communities in Maine. With the participation of Maine’s four Wabanaki tribes and the state government, the commission aims to propose policy changes and initiate a healing process.

For more than a century, Native American children were taken from their families and communities in systematic forced assimilation. As many as 35 percent of Native children were placed in non-Native homes and boarding schools. Some suffered abuse and neglect, and many were left with lifelong psychological scars. Extended families were irreparably fractured.

The Indian Child Welfare Act of 1978 attempted to reverse the state-sanctioned practice by mandating tribal jurisdiction over Native child custody cases. But a federal review in 1999 found Maine to be severely noncompliant, with Native children continuing to be removed from their homes at a much higher rate than white children.

A committee was formed with representatives of the state government and the Wabanaki tribes. They found that new regulations and cultural awareness training were not enough.

“We weren’t talking about what happened in the past,” said Esther Attean, a Passamaquoddy woman and a co-director of community outreach organization Maine-Wabanaki Reconciliation Engagement Advocacy Change Healing (REACH). “We were trying to do reconciliation work without the truth.”

In 2008 the committee began discussing the idea of creating a truth commission modeled after those in South Africa and Latin America. Canada and Australia have established truth commissions to deal exclusively with the treatment of indigenous peoples; the Maine Wabanaki TRC is the first to do so in the United States.

“It is innovative in the U.S. to start this kind of process,” said Eduardo Gonzalez, the director of the truth and memory program of the International Center for Transitional Justice. “But in my view, this should be seen as the avant-garde, something that should happen more extensively in all of the country, because by no means is what happened in Maine unique.”

‘Kill the Indian ... save the man’

Forced assimilation of Native American children in the U.S. dates back to the 1870s, when Army officer Richard Henry Pratt founded the Carlisle Indian Industrial School in Pennsylvania. The boarding school taught Native American children English, Christianity and European art and prohibited students from speaking their Native languages and practicing their cultural traditions.

Pratt famously wrote in an 1892 essay, “All the Indian there is in the race should be dead. Kill the Indian in him and save the man.”

His philosophy served as a model for boarding schools later founded by religious groups and the federal government’s Bureau of Indian Affairs. By 1973, an estimated 60,000 Native American children were enrolled in these schools.

Foster care and adoption programs also decimated Native American communities. In 1958, the U.S. Bureau of Indian Affairs and the Child Welfare League of America established the Indian Adoption Project, through which 395 Native American children were adopted by white families. By 1972 in Maine’s Aroostook County, 1 in 3 Native children were in foster care, according to Bacon.

The trauma of storytelling

At first, Wabanaki people were reluctant to participate in the TRC. Commissioner Carol Wishcamper said they distrusted a program that had the backing of the government and were not ready to open old wounds in the company of outsiders.

“The act of storytelling can be healing, but it also can be retraumatizing,” she said. “I don’t think anybody really anticipated the fact that there wouldn’t be trust of outsiders coming in. We thought that people were much readier than they were to meet the commission and tell their stories.”

Commissioners and statement gatherers had to rethink their approach to the tribal communities. After months of outreach, healing ceremonies and sharing circles, Wabanaki people began to tell their stories. The TRC has collected 159 statements from Wabanaki survivors, their family members, foster families and employees of the state child welfare system — social workers, judges, lawyers, guardians ad litem.

These statements, not yet publicly available, will be archived at Bowdoin College after the TRC’s closing ceremony in June. Then the work of implementing the commission’s recommendations begins. Much of that reconciliation work will be taken on by Maine-Wabanaki REACH.

“For us as white Mainers and for white people in this country, our job is to really look at what enabled that to happen and what’s alive in us today that enables that still to happen,” said Penthea Burns, a co-director of Maine-Wabanaki REACH.

The treatment of Wabanaki children must be considered, Burns said, within the context of an ongoing genocide against Native Americans. Attean agreed. She places the removal of Native children on a long list of injustices and indignities suffered by the Wabanaki peoples of Maine.

“Our land was taken. We couldn’t speak our language, couldn’t practice our religion, couldn’t farm, couldn’t fish, couldn’t hunt. But at least we had our families, and at least we had our children. We could still be together. But when they take the kids ...” Attean’s voice trailed off. “Without our children, what are we? They are everything.”

Direct Link: <http://america.aljazeera.com/articles/2015/5/1/wabanaki-truth-and-reconciliation-commission.html>

Aboriginal Communities Should Not Be Closed

Posted: 05/01/2015 11:31 am EDT Updated: 05/01/2015 11:59 am EDT



For over two centuries, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people of Australia have had to endure brutal aggression against their societies. Every year on Australia Day, Australians celebrate the arrival of the First British Fleet, on 26 January 1788, on the coast of Eora Country. But today, the first peoples of Australia still call it *Invasion Day*. This difference in perceptions bears witness to the political and cultural gap which separates Aboriginal people from other Australians.

But invasion is not a linear process, it varies in intensity, moves, its ways of reaching its objectives constantly redefined: control of territories, and social control. In colonised settler states such as Canada, New Zealand, or Australia, invasion is not a historical event, but a structure, as historian Patrick Wolfe notes. It is this structure that continues to determine the relationships between Australian -- state and federal -- governments and the first peoples of the continent.

So just imagine one day getting told that your suburb will *be closed*. That you won't have access to electricity, water, health care and education for your children any longer, i.e. to the services that every other citizen of the country where you live is entitled to. The reason? Not a war, as is the case in many places where populations are forced to flee and hide, but the simple fact that the government has decided that you cannot live more than 100 kms away from a town, sharing with others a *lifestyle* in a community deemed unsustainable and unlikely to attract development opportunities for the future.

In November 2014, the Premier of Western Australia, Colin Barnett, announced the imminent closure of more than a hundred Aboriginal communities in his state. The term *closure* defined as putting a stop to essential government services (water, electricity) to which all Australian citizens are entitled, whatever their situation. This sudden announcement, made without any consultation with the people it targets, comes after 10 years of negotiations between the Federal Government of Australia, and the governments of the States and Territories, regarding the financial support of Indigenous communities deemed "remote." It also occurs in a context of unprecedented mining exploration in the remote regions of the continent.

Balkinjirr, three hours from Broome, in the West Kimberley, is one of those targeted communities. This small community is completely self-sufficient (solar panels, sewerage system, maintenance, rubbish collection) -- everything there has been done for years by members of the community without any financial support from the government. Aboriginal people there have built the Majala Wilderness Centre (with an auditorium and seven cabins for visitors) where they organise youth development camps for young people in Derby, and other training programs to combat high unemployment rates. The community has also partnered with universities in France and New Zealand on diverse research projects, and hosted numerous visits of international academics. Other communities, between 30 and 700 people, do not perhaps have such autonomy, but all have houses and essential services. Since the 1970s, Aboriginal people have managed these communities with elected councils and other transversal organisations that support an alternative way of life based on their cultural heritage.

The "closure" plan, whose details (criteria, time frame, completion) the government team is keeping vague intentionally, is the last episode of an attack against these communities initiated under the government of John Howard (1996-2007) which unilaterally declared the failure of "self-determination" of Aboriginal Australia. (for Aboriginal Australia?). Indeed, these communities clearly bear witness to the will and determination of a great number of Indigenous groups to re-establish themselves on their own Countries and territories, according to their own modes of social organisation, with or without the agreement of the Australian public authorities: it is one of the most powerful expressions of their sovereignty. These peoples have 60,000 years of social, political and cultural construction to assert and express, and we have much to learn from them.

Over the past fifteen or so years the term "dysfunction" has been used by the government to label isolated Aboriginal communities and to justify their closure, without bothering about nuances or offering any sound evidence. The precedents -- the Intervention in the Northern Territory, the closure of the communities of Oombulgurri and Swann Valley -- are catastrophic. Indigenous communities are undeniably facing serious and real socio-economic difficulties, but it would be indecent and irresponsible to lay blame for this situation solely on them. While the Western Australian government, the richest of the Australian states, spends billions of dollars, it also has some of the highest rates of Indigenous incarceration and suicide in the world. What is dysfunctional is the relationship between the Australian state and federal governments and Indigenous peoples.

One of the defining characteristics of Australian-style settler colonialism is the reductionist notion that construes this relationship as a socio-economic problem only. For forty years, this socio-economic policy has mostly entrenched and perpetuated intolerable levels of inequality between Aboriginal people, Torres Strait Islanders and the rest of the Australian population. The issue is by no means a new one. Australian governments have never seen fit to conceive of their relations with Indigenous people in a political realm. The absence of a political dialogue conducted in good faith between the Australian governments and the Indigenous population is quite blatant, and unworthy of a society which claims to be democratic.

We who are working, and for some of us have been working for decades, with Indigenous communities, with their members and their organisations, know that, in each of the communities, there are men and women who are acutely aware of their own difficulties and fight day after day to try to address these issues with appropriate responses, whether these involve art, bicultural educational pathways or micro-tourism initiatives, etc. We know that Indigenous groups, through their histories, their cultures and their relationship to the land, have particular and valuable resources to offer that can provide solutions not only to their own situation but can contribute to Australian society as a whole.

These people are not listened to and the funding provided to their organisations is whittled away with each new reform. Out of the billions of dollars that Australian governments spend each year, how much is actually spent in the communities? And with what results? For decades the reports and recommendations have been piling up -- each one identifies the involvement and consent of the local communities in the working out of solutions as a determining factor of success.

These recommendations, just like those of the United Nations, are not put into action. What colonial policies have not been able to bring to final fruition -- the elimination of Indigenous peoples -- Australian governments now entrust to social and economic policy, and to bureaucratic measures which are often an excuse to get around, and indeed to crush, different forms of Aboriginal resistance.

The goals being pursued are concealed beneath a thin veil of paternalist arrogance. The government of Western Australia has not succeeded in forcing Indigenous communities to negotiate the funding of their essential infrastructure (roads, municipal buildings, access to water etc.) with resource extraction companies, so it will use more radical methods. By closing communities and undermining the conditions necessary for the autonomy of their organisations, by emptying Aboriginal Countries of their inhabitants, the objective is to leave the field free to the mining investors, the main players in the state's economic boom. How else are we to understand the fact that the announcement of the closure of Aboriginal communities in Western Australia, in the complete absence of any evaluation of its impact and of any planning, is accompanied by a major reform of Indigenous Heritage protection laws, one that will weaken them further? Without an Indigenous presence on the land, both tangible and intangible, there will be no more legitimate protests against industrial projects of all kinds.

The Australian governments trample their international obligations on the rights of Indigenous peoples in their own country. Australia contravenes so many articles and principles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples -- to which they were one of the last signatories -- that it would be tedious to enumerate them all. And this attitude does not solely apply to Indigenous peoples: across the board (refugees, environment, violence against women etc.), the federal government prefers to attack human rights organizations rather than step up to fulfill its own promises and responsibilities.

This May 1st numerous demonstrations are to be held in Australia against the forced closure of communities and against the Indigenous policies of present governments. We here declare our support for these initiatives and call on all Australian governments to urgently review their policies in relation to Indigenous peoples, to respect their basic human rights and to engage in a real dialogue with them, their organizations and their institutions, in order to identify with them the means of peacefully resolving their differences.

SIGNATORIES (in order of signature)

Martin Préaud (anthropologist, SOGIP)

Barbara Glowczewski (professorial research tenure, LAS, CNRS-Collège de France-EHESS)

Jessica De Largy Healy (anthropologist, CREDO, EHESS-CNRS-Université Aix Marseille)

Géraldine Le Roux (senior lecturer, UBO, Brest)

Estelle Castro-Koshy (researcher, TransOceanik, LIA CNRS/JCU)

Magali McDuffie (PhD candidate and filmmaker, ANU)

Lise Garond (anthropologist, Université Montaigne, Bordeaux)

Arnaud Morvan (postdoctoral fellow, LAS/Fonds AXA)

Bernard Moizo (professorial research tenure, GRED/IRD)

Vanessa Castejon (senior lecturer, Université Paris 13)

Marie-Christine Masset (poet, translator, Marseille)

Vanessa Escalante (film maker)

Maia Ponsonnet (postdoctoral fellow, Dynamique du Langage, ASLAN CNRS/Université Lyon 2)

Laurent Dousset (professor, CREDO, EHESS-CNRS-Aix Marseille)

Elodie Fache (postdoctoral fellow, ECOPAS, CREDO, EHESS-CNRS-Aix Marseille)

Isabelle Merle (research tenure, CNRS, CREDO et IREMAM)

Marika Moisseff (research tenure, CNRS, laboratory of Scoail Anthropology)

Stephane Le Queux (senior lecturer, TransOceanik/JCU, ECT Business School of Tahiti)

Analysis by Nidala Barker, Australian Indigenous student at Macquarie University, Sydney, 20 years:

Though it cannot be denied that the proposed foreclosure of remote indigenous communities is a political act from the federal government (possibly to encourage a re-shift of the cost of running the communities onto state governments), it must not shade over the social insight it has triggered.

Australia's specificity around racism lies in that the vast majority of the population is neither racist nor unprejudiced, but rather lies in a middle ground of uncertainty regarding their views on indigenous Australians. [This is mostly due to the distance, both physical and intellectual, between the 'average' white Australian and indigenous culture and realities.]

As a result of this, most white Australians are happy to acknowledge the importance and value of certain aspects of indigenous culture (i.e. painting and dance), however become very uncomfortable when the accommodation of this valuing impedes on what they believe they are entitled to -- and that is mostly tax payer money.

The issue of the foreclosure of remote indigenous communities has created a very visible strain between these two areas -- on one hand this middle majority understand that there is some importance to the land in indigenous culture, and on the other they are very unsure if this is something that the state (and by extension their tax contributions) should be paying for. As this issue is finally being more mediatised, the middle Australian is being forced to think about where they stand in a society which leaks its subtle racism between generations yet, is being taught all about how harmonious and unprejudiced Australia is.

Translated by Stephanie Anderson and Magali McDuffie from HuffPost [France](#).

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/martin-preaud/australian-aboriginal-communities-should-not-be-closed_b_7161392.html

Pope defends soon-to-be saint vs Native American objections

By FRANCES D'EMILIO May 2, 2015 2:49 PM

ROME (AP) — Pope Francis on Saturday praised the zeal of an 18th-century Franciscan missionary he will make a saint when he visits the United States this fall but whom Native Americans say brutally converted indigenous people to Christianity.

Francis praised Junipero Serra during a homily at a Rome seminary training future priests from North America. The pope will proclaim the Spaniard a saint during a Washington, D.C., ceremony Sept. 23.

Native Americans have protested in California, saying the friar should be criticized for what they contend was his role in wiping out native populations in a campaign to impose Catholicism. They contend he enslaved converts and that missionaries like him helped spread diseases like smallpox which decimated their people.

Francis described Serra as part of a missionary corps who "went out to all the geographical, social and existential peripheries" to spread the Gospel.

"Such zeal excites us," Francis said.

Serra, who died in 1784, "ushered in a new springtime of evangelization in those immense territories, extending from Florida to California," Francis said. The Vatican sees Serra as a role model for the growing U.S. Hispanic Catholic population.



The soon-to-be saint also helped defend "indigenous people against abuses by the colonizers," Francis contended.

Without wading into specific criticisms of Serra, Francis said of these missionaries: "Sometimes we stop and thoughtfully examine their strengths and, above all, their weaknesses and shortcomings."

Native Americans are outraged that Serra is becoming a saint, blaming him and other missionaries for nearly eradicating their culture.

"No Indians pray to Serra here," said Ron Andrade, a member of the La Jolla Indian Reservation and director of the Los Angeles City and County Native American Indian Commission.

When Spanish missionaries moved up the coast in their quest for new souls, "we moved inland, we moved away from the churches," Andrade said in a phone interview about Francis' honoring Serra. "(Serra knew) by destroying the culture and the lifestyle (of Native Americans), they would die."



The missionary work was done to "acquire land and souls, whether they were alive or dead," Andrade said. He also lamented that the pope "didn't sent out his bishops to ask if there was anything to be ashamed of" about Serra.

In Francis' homily, the church's first Latin American pope expressed awe for the likes of Serra, saying "I wonder if today we are able to respond with the same generosity and courage" in leaving comfortable lives to proclaim God to those who haven't "experienced the embrace of his mercy."

Before celebrating Mass at the seminary with Francis, Washington Cardinal Donald Wuerl dismissed concerns that canonizing Serra could be a divisive act offending Native Americans.

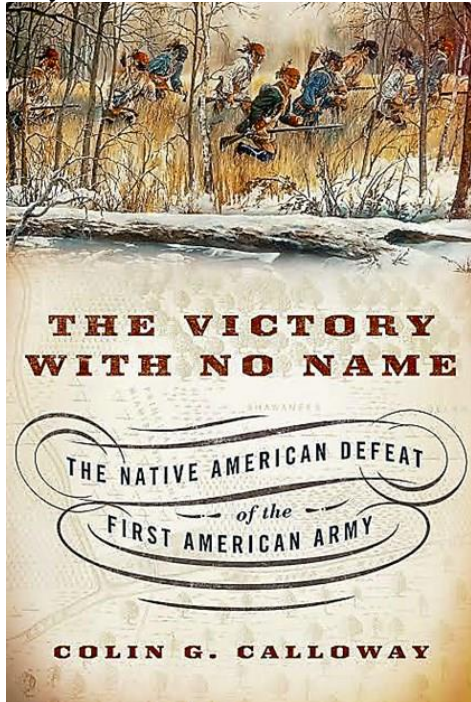
"The message of the Holy Father is reconciliation," Wuerl said.

Native Americans, including inter-tribal council members in California, have been lobbying for the removal of a statue of Serra from the U.S. Capitol.

Direct Link: <http://news.yahoo.com/pope-defends-soon-saint-vs-native-american-objections-142555659.html>

'The Victory With No Name': Native Americans win the battle but lose the war

May 3, 2015 12:00 AM



"The Victory with No Name" by Colin G. Calloway.

By Brian O'Neill / Pittsburgh Post-Gazette

"The Victory With No Name: The Native American Defeat of the First American Army" by Colin G. Calloway is the true story of a Native American army that thrashed an American army and scared a young nation to its bones.

It happened in 1791, less than a decade past the American Revolution, when the States seemed no more united than the Indian confederacy that stood in the way of the white man's expansion.

"THE VICTORY WITH NO NAME: THE NATIVE AMERICAN DEFEAT OF THE FIRST AMERICAN ARMY"

By Colin G. Calloway

Oxford University Press (\$24.95).

The Northwest Territory was a vast expanse west of Pennsylvania and north of the Ohio River, stretching to the Mississippi River. President George Washington worried that the various tribes might unite with the Spanish to the south or British to the north, but the

natives didn't need much help to defeat the woefully unprepared force that came after them.

Arthur St. Clair led the doomed army. The 54-year-old Revolutionary War veteran had signed peace treaties with two confederations of tribes in 1789 hoping to divide them, but not all bought in. The Indian nations in Ohio hadn't agreed to the Peace of Paris that ended the Revolutionary War, and believed that the earlier Treaty of Fort Stanwix required Americans that far west to stay south of the Ohio River.

Mr. Calloway is both a detailed and accessible storyteller, and his book exhibits great respect for the diplomatic and military prowess of the Native American confederacy, however brief its success. Before St. Clair, an expedition the previous year led by Josiah Harmar "that was supposed to quash Indian resistance only intensified it."

A motley, intermittently drunken force floated down the Ohio from Pittsburgh to meet St. Clair's army in Fort Washington (Cincinnati) in the summer of 1791. The ill-equipped forces that marched north that September made slow progress through rain-drenched woods.

There were desertions and losses of horses and lives to Indians along the way, and on the night of Nov. 3, roughly 1,100 Americans ended a nine-mile march by making camp at the Wabash River.

There were no defensive fortifications. St. Clair didn't believe the Indians had the capacity for organized resistance. His own scouts' reports that night of a large force ahead never got through lower officers to him.

At first light, the Shawnee, Delaware and Miami led a crescent-shaped assault with Ottawa, Ojibwa, Potawatomi, Wyandot and Iroquois on the flanks. Indians surrounded the camp and took special care to kill American officers. St. Clair led a bayonet charge but American lines crumbled and he finally ordered 'a desperate retreat.'

"The Indians stuffed dirt into the mouths of some of the dead, a gesture of contempt for land-hungry Americans."

The Americans lost 630 men. The First Congress would investigate under the new Constitution, and the enduring principle of executive privilege was established when the cabinet advised Washington to release to Congress only those papers "that the public good would permit" and keep the rest.

The congressional committee absolved St. Clair and blamed the defeat on contractor fraud.

Western Pennsylvanians feared the federal government was incapable of bringing order, but Congress greatly increased the size of the Army and gave the president the power to

draft state militias into a federal force (something Washington would use to quash the Whiskey Rebellion in the fall of 1794).

In August 1794, with troops that had moved down the Ohio from Pittsburgh more than a year before, General Anthony Wayne burned native villages and crops in Ohio. In August, Wayne's army defeated an Indian force at the battle of Fallen Timbers, about 100 miles northeast of St. Clair's defeat.

"At the Treaty of Greenville in the summer of 1795, chiefs from the confederacy that had twice defeated American invasions of Ohio signed away the southern and eastern two-thirds of Ohio" and lands farther west.

Little Turtle, a Miami chief, in a later visit to Philadelphia, said of the booming population of whites there, "They spread like oil upon a blanket; we dissolve like the snow before the vernal Sun."

It is with no small irony that Mr. Calloway writes on the final page, "In proportion to their population, more Native Americans serve in the U.S. Army than any other group."

Direct Link: <http://www.post-gazette.com/ae/books/2015/05/03/The-Victory-With-No-Name-Native-Americans-win-the-battle-but-lose-the-war/stories/201505030045>

Festival helps preserve Native American culture

Bob Gross, Times Herald 4:14 p.m. EDT May 3, 2015

Allison Radell, of Detroit, leaps in the air as she dances during the American Indian Festival Saturday, May 2, 2015 at Algonac Elementary School.



Marcus Winchester came from Niles, in the southwest corner of Michigan, to be at Saturday's American Indian Festival in Algonac.

"I came here to dance," he said. "I was asked to be head dancer for the celebration."

Winchester was dressed in traditional Potawatomi regalia with an elaborate fur headpiece.

"It's important to come together and be with other native peoples, to socialize and to have a good time," he said. "I hope other people are having a good time watching and enjoying the dancing and singing."

The festival, at Algonac Elementary School, evolved from a celebration for the Native American children in the Algonac, East China and Anchor Bay school districts, said Susan Wrobel. She is the director of the American Indian education programs for the three school districts.

"It has ballooned into a rather large event," she said.

"It is to teach our children about our culture and also the non-native children about the native culture," she said.

People danced in the school gymnasium and enjoyed native foods such as fry bread, Indian tacos and corn soup. They greeted each other with handshakes and hugs.

"It's like one big happy family," Wrobel said. "We have returning children who are bringing their children, and even people bringing their grandchildren."

Clara Larush, who lives in Eastpointe, was wearing a jingle dress covered with small conical bells.

"It's for the healing of our people," she said. "I wear it only at powwows and special ceremonies."

She is a member of the [Lac Courte Oreilles](#) band of Ojibwe near Hayward, Wisconsin and was at the event with her family.

Allison Radell is a member of the Powhatan tribe from Virginia. She lives in the Detroit area.

"That was a fancy dance," she said while trying to catch her breath. "It's actually called a crow hop."

She said the event was a good way to get both native and non-native peoples together.

"People learn we exist, and we are still here," she said.

Iron Shirt, 37, says her father still has bad memories of the treatment he received for speaking his native Blackfeet at school. "He didn't want us to go through that," she says. "So my generation missed out on the language."

Iron Shirt tried to make up for that loss by enrolling her own daughter, Jade, in a private Blackfeet language immersion school. Now 16, Jade can speak the language fluently with her grandparents, something for which she's grateful.

"You learn about your culture more," she says. "And that's what's more important, you know? 'Cause our culture is dying."

Thanks to a [new Montana state bill](#), expected to be signed into law this week, more Native American kids will have the same opportunity. The bill subsidizes Native American language immersion programs in public schools.

As tribes have reclaimed the right to educate their own children in recent years, native language instruction has been introduced in some Montana schools. But this is the first time the state will be supporting immersion programs — which provide instruction in an indigenous language for at least half the school day.

April Charlo was first exposed to her tribe's Salish language in a seventh grade class. She's now the executive director of the [Nkwusm Salish Language School](#) serving preschool through eighth-grade students on the Flathead Reservation in northwestern Montana.

For Charlo, immersion programs aren't just about preserving indigenous tongues. She believes they are also essential for closing the achievement gap — an important consideration in Montana, where the [high school graduation rate for American Indian students](#) is almost 20 percentage points lower than for students of any other race or ethnicity.

"The language and culture and tradition and ceremonies, they're interlocked, they're interlinked. So when a child is learning their language, it just goes right to that connection."

- April Charlo, executive director of the Nkwusm Salish Language School

"The language and culture and tradition and ceremonies, they're interlocked, they're interlinked," Charlo says. "So when a child is learning their language, it just goes right to that connection."

And that connection, Charlo emphasizes, is what helps kids succeed. "It's just a confidence ... 'I know my language, I know where I come from.' "

Under the bill, schools that are interested in creating immersion programs must apply to receive funding that will help compensate native language instructors.

The only other state that provides funding for native language immersion in public schools is Hawaii, which has one native language. In Montana, there are nine.

Jonathan Windy Boy, a Democratic state senator and a Chippewa Cree Indian, sponsored the immersion bill. "We're investing in a population of this state that has been neglected for too long," he says. "Investing in those human resources, I think ... is going to be the best investment that we can provide for all of Montana to be a better place to live in."

The state legislature capped that investment at \$22,500 total per year — half of what Windy Boy originally proposed and only enough to provide partial support to a handful of programs.

But some of the bill's opponents, including Republican State Senator Roger Webb, think the cost of immersion programs should be borne exclusively by tribes.

"I would rather see individuals, you know, learn Spanish or French or Chinese," Webb says. As for native language immersion, "If they really believe that that's an issue, it could be remedied on a home base."

"The policies of the government ... helped almost eradicate the languages. So ... the state might as well put some money in to help bring it back."

- Roy Big Crane, member of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille tribes

But Montana resident Roy Big Crane, a member of the Salish and Pend d'Oreille tribes, emphasizes that the state has a special responsibility to help revive native languages.

"It was through the policies of the government, the states, Christianity, public school systems, that helped almost eradicate the languages," he says. "So that circle might as well come back and the state might as well put some money in to help bring it back."

Direct Link: <http://www.npr.org/2015/05/02/403576800/montana-offers-a-boost-to-native-language-immersion-programs>

Rescued Out of Slavery: Indigenous Workers Removed from Agricultural Sites in Mexico

[Rick Kearns](#)

5/3/15

Last month, Mexican authorities rescued 200 Tarahumara men, women and children from an agricultural work camp in northwestern Mexico where they were held against their will and subjected to inhuman working and living conditions.

Federal legislators then voted to push the country's attorney general and human rights commission to conduct thorough investigations into this case and to fine those responsible for the violations, as well as to create policies to prevent these types of abuses in the future.

On March 16 Secretary of Labor and Social Oversight Alfonso Navarrete announced that authorities had rescued the 200 Tarahumara people from two work sites belonging to the El Cerezo Rural Production Society Limited in the southern part of Baja California.

"More than 200 Tarahumara indigenous people were tricked and transported 560 miles away from their communities into shameful, illegal conditions for miserable salaries," Navarrete said.

"They were found to be housed...under unhealthy conditions, in tiny shacks put together with sticks, black plastic bags, belts, sacks and cardboard amidst puddles of mud and garbage, with completely contaminated bathrooms and little access to water. There were found approximately 15 children, from infants to adolescents of less than 14 years old," he added.

Navarrete explained that the Labor Ministry launched the investigation after receiving complaints of exploitation, threats from bosses and living in inhuman conditions by men who had fled the labor camps. The Ministry sent inspectors to the El Cerezo sites who then found 113 violations of labor laws including: unsafe and unhealthy conditions in the workplace; lack of bathrooms and drinkable water; lack of adequate eating areas, and lack of protective gear for work. Along with these violations the inspectors noted 13 minors working in the facility and 167 workers who were not registered for Social Security and consequently would not receive those benefits.

Navarrete referred the case to both the Federal Attorney General's office and the National Commission on Human Rights.

One week after the announcement federal legislators urged both federal and local officials to sanction the companies involved to the full extent of the law and to provide more inspections and oversight to prevent the human rights violations against the mostly indigenous agricultural workers.

The Coordinator of the National Action Party, Ricardo Anaya, condemned the violations on March 25 in a press event. "We reject it, but above all we urge the authorities to, with complete firmness, to punish those shameless companies that are exploiting these workers and let the chips fall where they may, there must be severe sanctions to serve as an example," Anaya stated.

In the meantime, officials from the state of Chihuahua, home region of the Tarahumara, have offered to provide formal employment to the workers as well as child-care for their families.

Read more at <https://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/03/rescued-out-slavery-indigenous-workers-removed-agricultural-sites-mexico-160198>

Adam Sandler comedy accused of using makeup so actors look Native American

The Netflix comedy western is in trouble yet again as a source claims makeup has been used to bronze actors of various ethnicities to make them look more Native American



Adam Sandler's first Netflix comedy faced with more trouble. Photograph: Jason Merritt/Getty Images

Monday 4 May 2015 09.37 BST Last modified on Monday 4 May 2015 09.40 BST

After last month saw Native American actors walk off the set of the new [Adam Sandler](#) movie over an offensive script, the production is now facing further allegations of racism.

According to [The Hollywood Reporter](#), a source from the set of *The Ridiculous Six* claims the makeup team has been darkening the skin of various actors, of different ethnicities, to ensure they look more Native American.

Allison Young, an actor involved in the comedy, confirmed this to MSNBC.

"I'm full-blooded Navajo and they bronzed me. I was quite confused," she said. "That says something when the cultural advisor for the film quits because he's offended."

[Can the recycled bigotry of Adam Sandler's *Ridiculous Six* do some good?](#)

The comedy western, which also stars Steve Buscemi, Nick Nolte and Luke Wilson, is the first film in Adam Sandler's four-picture deal with [Netflix](#). Last month, a group of Native American actors walked off set after being uncomfortable with the film's

depiction of Apache culture. A video then emerged that showed one of the producers telling them to leave if they were “overly sensitive”.

Netflix has yet to respond to the latest claim but released a statement last month that read: “The movie has ridiculous in the title for a reason: because it is ridiculous. It is a broad satire of Western movies and the stereotypes they popularised, featuring a diverse cast that is not only part of – but in on – the joke.”

Vanilla Ice, who stars as Mark Twain in the film, [also came to the film’s defence](#).

“It’s a comedy,” he said. “I don’t think anybody really had any ill feeling or any intent or anything. This movie isn’t Dances With Wolves. It’s a comedy. They’re not there to showcase anything about anybody – they’re just making a funny movie, I think. I don’t have anything to do with it. I just play my part.”

Direct Link: <http://www.theguardian.com/film/2015/may/04/adam-sandler-the-ridiculous-six-darkening-makeup-actors-netflix>

Native American Actors Work to Overcome a Long-Documented Bias

By [CARA BUCKLEY](#) MAY 4, 2015



Tantoo Cardinal, a Canadian indigenous actress, said she was hopeful of change when Native American actors walked off a set.

Late in April, after Native American actors [walked off](#) in disgust from the set of [Adam Sandler](#)’s latest film, a western sendup that its distributor, Netflix, has defended as being equally offensive to all, a glow of pride spread through several Native American communities.

Tantoo Cardinal, a Canadian indigenous actress who played Black Shawl in “Dances With Wolves,” recalled thinking to herself, “It’s come.” Larry Sellers, who starred as

Cloud Dancing in the 1990s television show “Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman,” thought, “It’s about time.” Jesse Wenté, who is Ojibwe and directs film programming at the TIFF Bell Lightbox in Toronto, found himself encouraged and surprised. There are so few film roles for indigenous actors, he said, that walking off the set of a major production showed real mettle.

But what didn’t surprise Mr. Wenté was the content of the script. According to the actors who walked off the set, the film, titled “The Ridiculous Six,” included a Native American woman who passes out and is revived after white men douse her with alcohol, and another woman squatting to urinate while lighting a peace pipe. “There’s enough history at this point to have set some expectations around these sort of Hollywood depictions,” Mr. Wenté said.

The walkout prompted a rhetorical “What do you expect from an Adam Sandler film?,” and a Netflix spokesman said that in the movie, blacks, Mexicans and whites were lampooned as well. But Native American actors and critics said a broader issue was at stake. While mainstream portrayals of native peoples have, Mr. Wenté said, become “incrementally better” over the decades, he and others say, they remain far from accurate and reflect a lack of opportunities for Native American performers. What’s more, as Native Americans hunger for representation on screen, critics say the absence of three-dimensional portrayals has very real off-screen consequences.

“Our people are still healing from historical trauma,” said Loren Anthony, one of the actors who walked out. “Our youth are still trying to figure out who they are, where they fit in this society. Kids are killing themselves. They’re not proud of who they are.” They also don’t, he added, see themselves on prime time television or the big screen. Netflix noted while about five people walked off the “The Ridiculous Six” set, [100 or so Native American actors and extras stayed](#).

But in interviews, nearly a dozen Native American actors and film industry experts said that Mr. Sandler’s humor perpetuated decades-old negative stereotypes. Mr. Anthony said such depictions helped feed the [despondency many Native Americans feel](#), with deadly results: Native Americans have the highest suicide rate out of all the country’s ethnicities.

The on-screen problem is twofold, Mr. Anthony and others said: There’s a paucity of roles for Native Americans — according to the Screen Actors Guild in 2008 they accounted for 0.3 percent of all on-screen parts (those figures have yet to be updated), compared to about 2 percent of the general population — and Native American actors are often perceived in a narrow way.

In his Peabody Award-winning documentary “[Reel Injun](#),” the Cree filmmaker Neil Diamond explored Hollywood depictions of Native Americans over the years, and found they fell into a few stereotypical categories: the Noble Savage, the Drunk Indian, the Mystic, the Indian Princess, the backward tribal people futilely fighting John Wayne and manifest destiny. While the 1990 film “Dances With Wolves” won praise for depicting

Native Americans as fully fleshed out human beings, not all indigenous people embraced it. It was still told, critics said, from the colonialists' point of view. In an interview, John Trudell, a Santee Sioux writer, actor ("Thunderheart") and the former chairman of the American Indian Movement, described the film as "a story of two white people."

"God bless 'Dances with Wolves,' " Michael Horse, who played Deputy Hawk in "Twin Peaks," said sarcastically. "Even 'Avatar.' Someone's got to come save the tribal people."

Dan Spilo, a partner at Industry Entertainment who represents Adam Beach, one of today's most prominent Native American actors, said while typecasting dogs many minorities, it is especially intractable when it comes to Native Americans. Casting directors, he said, rarely cast them as police officers, doctors or lawyers. "There's the belief that the Native American character should be on reservations or riding a horse," he said.

"We don't see ourselves," Mr. Horse said. "We're still an antiquated culture to them, and to the rest of the world."

Ms. Cardinal said she was once turned down for the role of the wife of a child-abusing cop because the filmmakers felt that casting her would somehow be "too political."

Another sore point is the long run of white actors playing American Indians, among them Burt Lancaster, Rock Hudson, Audrey Hepburn and, more recently, Johnny Depp, whose depiction of Tonto in the 2013 film "Lone Ranger," was viewed as racist by detractors. There are, of course, exceptions. The former A&E series "Longmire," which, as it happens, will now be on Netflix, was roundly praised for its depiction of life on a Northern Cheyenne reservation, with Lou Diamond Phillips, who is of Cherokee descent, playing a Northern Cheyenne man.

Others also point to the success of Mr. Beach, who played a Mohawk detective in "Law & Order: Special Victims Unit" and landed a starring role in the forthcoming D C Comics picture "Suicide Squad." Mr. Beach said he had come across insulting scripts backed by people who don't see anything wrong with them.

"I'd rather starve than do something that is offensive to my ancestral roots," Mr. Beach said. "But I think there will always be attempts to draw on the weakness of native people's struggles. The savage Indian will always be the savage Indian. The white man will always be smarter and more cunning. The cavalry will always win."

The solution, Mr. Wenthe, Mr. Trudell and others said, lies in getting more stories written by and starring Native Americans. But Mr. Wenthe noted that while independent indigenous film has blossomed in the last two decades, mainstream depictions have yet to catch up. "You have to stop expecting for Hollywood to correct it, because there seems to be no ability or desire to correct it," Mr. Wenthe said.

There have been calls to boycott Netflix but, writing for [Indian Country Today Media Network](#), which first broke news of the walk off, the filmmaker Brian Young noted that the distributor also offered a number of films by or about Native Americans.

The furor around “The Ridiculous Six” may drive more people to see it. Then one of the questions that Mr. Trudell, echoing others, had about the film will be answered: “Who the hell laughs at this stuff?”

Direct Link: http://www.nytimes.com/2015/05/05/movies/native-american-actors-work-to-overcome-a-long-documented-bias.html?_r=0

Free good idea: Put a Native American woman on the \$20 bill

by [Jorge Rivas](#) | May 5, 2015 2:39 PM
David Fulmer/CC/Flickr
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A number of groups have started campaigns urging the U.S. Mint to replace Andrew Jackson on the \$20 bill with a woman or a Native or African American. Now the host of NPR’s *Morning Edition*, Steve Inskeep, is chiming in with an intriguing compromise.

In a New York Times [op-ed](#) published Tuesday morning Inskeep recommended putting a different face on each side of the bill.

“But that doesn’t mean [Andrew] Jackson should go completely. He should remain on the \$20 bill, but on the flip side — because there’s a flip side of the story,” Inskeep wrote in the editorial.

Inskeep provided a few other examples, like keeping Abraham Lincoln on one side of the \$5 bill and on the flip side, adding “Frederick Douglass, the escaped slave who prodded him to move faster to end slavery.”

Jackson, who didn’t believe in a central banking system, has become a prime target for the campaign to add diversity to U.S. currency. He favored gold and silver coin, or “hard money,” over paper currency, points out the group [Women on \\$20s](#), which is lobbying to put a woman on the \$20 bill by 2020.

Inskeep also spent some time in his op-ed looking at Jackson’s troubling history of pushing Native American tribes out of resource-rich land.

One of Women on \$20’s proposals is to put a Native American woman on the \$20 bill: Wilma Mankiller, the principal chief of the Cherokee Nation and the first elected female Chief of a native nation in modern times.



Former principal chief of the Cherokee Nation Wilma Mankiller's mockup on a \$20 bill. (Photo: Women on 20s)

There is precedent for putting women on U.S. currency. In 2003 the [U.S. Mint](#) put author Helen Keller on the reverse of the Alabama quarter. Susan B. Anthony was on the dollar coin until 1981. The only woman on U.S. currency that is circulating is Sacagawea, the Native American woman who served as a guide to the Lewis and Clark expedition. She's been gracing the dollar coin since 1999.

There's no particularly stringent rules for who graces dollar bills; according to U.S. law, they just have to be dead, the [New Yorker's Vauhini Vara points out](#). Then it's all up to the Secretary of the Treasury, who decides on the portraits and design of the bill.

President Obama last year said he thought "it was a pretty good idea" to put a woman on U.S. currency.

Direct Link: <http://fusion.net/story/130649/free-good-idea-put-a-native-american-woman-on-the-20-bill/>

Could Lost Bird's Tragedy Inspire a Triumph for Native Americans?

Posted: 05/05/2015 3:35 pm EDT Updated: 1 hour ago



Brian George with Photographs of Lost Bird's Grave Site

Several years ago, I first posted about the Native American baby girl who was found alive under the frozen body of her mother on the blood-soaked fields of Wounded Knee, SD, four days after the massacre on December 29, 1890, that killed more than 300 Lakota men, women and children. I had purchased a vintage photograph showing the infant in the arms of Leonard Colby, the brigadier general who adopted Zintkala Nuni or "Lost Bird" as the surviving Lakota called her. I learned that her life was one of unremitting tragedy. She suffered every kind of injury the White Man has imposed on Native Americans -- including sexual abuse from her adoptive father. She was exploited in Buffalo Bill's Wild West Show and in early silent films, forced to play stereotypical Indians (which is still happening -- witness the Native Americans who walked off the set of Adam Sandler's comedy *Ridiculous Six* last week).

As an adult, Lost Bird saw one child die and gave away another because she couldn't raise him. She died of syphilis and the Spanish flu on Valentine's Day, 1920, aged 29, and was buried in a pauper's grave in California. But 71 years later, her people, the Lakota, found her grave and [brought her remains back to Wounded Knee](#).

I wrote about Lost Bird's story on [my blog "A Rolling Crone" in 2012](#). Then, early this year, I received an email from Brian George, a Native American who works at the St. Joseph's Indian School in Chamberlain, SD, which houses over 200 Native American children whose parents cannot care for them (and there are 100 more on the waiting list.) Brian told me an intriguing story of how he has taken Lost Bird as his "guiding spirit" and visits her grave every year on the day she died. While he says he is cynical, he has encountered many unexplainable signs that her spirit is with him.

Brian emailed me a photograph of a tattoo of the baby Lost Bird on his shoulder, with the word "Wakanyeya" which means "children are a sacred."

"Every morning I look at the tattoo and vow that our 212 young Lakota students don't endure the same," he wrote.

I have tried to turn her tragedy into an inspiration. I believe Zintka knows that I am all about helping the Lakota children and she is my guide. I see endless cycles of poverty, addiction, suicide and abuse... However, the people are resilient, strong and have that special Native sense of humor. I call the reservations in our country "The forgotten America."

(Yesterday, Monday, May 4, the *New York Times* published on its front page [an article about the epidemic of suicides among the young people on the reservations of South Dakota](#) -- especially Pine Ridge, which is on the ground of Wounded Knee. Since December, nine between the ages of 12 and 24 have committed suicide and 103 more have tried.)

Brian wrote that he is the Major Gift Officer for St. Joseph's and often travels East on business, so on April 15, I met him in Philadelphia to learn more about his connection to Lost Bird.

Brian describes himself as a member of the Chickasaw Nation of Oklahoma, but he's one-third Irish and one-third Scottish. He grew up in the suburbs of Dallas and never thought of himself as Native American until, at the age of 30, in 1993, he attended the funeral of his full-blooded grandmother.

As I walked in, all these elderly Native ladies ran up saying 'You look just like your great grandfather' -- a man named Winchester Colbert. I looked him up and our likeness is stunning. He was a governor of the Chickasaw Nation and served in that capacity during the Civil War.

After a divorce in 2007, Brian was working for the Chickasaw Nation outside Oklahoma City as a host at a casino by day and a bouncer by night, but he felt a "hole in my heart." A number of coincidences drew his attention on Easter Sunday, 2010 to an ad in the newspaper saying, "Want to make the world a better place? St. Joseph Indian School."

Brian started at St. Joseph's as a houseparent.

That hole in my heart has become whole again with the unconditional love I give and receive from the Lakota children I raised and continue to mentor. No more breaking up fights in bars. Now I help put together lives once shattered by the tragedies of reservation life. Then a person named Zintkala Nuni, Lost Bird of Wounded Knee came into my life.

Brian first discovered the story of Lost Bird when he was substitute teaching in St. Joseph's "Native American Studies" class. The class watched a 30-minute DVD titled *Lost Bird of Wounded Knee: Spirit of the Lakota*. Then he purchased a book with the same title, written by Renee Sansom, who was a social worker in South Dakota when a coworker showed her an old photograph she had found in an attic. It was the self-same photograph that I bought some years later. Sansom spent the next five years researching and writing Zintka's story. In the book, Brian discovered that Lost Bird had spent two years -- 1905 to '06 -- attending a school named Chamberlain Indian Industrial Boarding School on the same ground where St. Joseph's is today.

He decided to make the three-hour drive from St. Joseph's to Wounded Knee to pay his respects to Lost Bird and the other victims of the massacre. The visit was unremarkable until he was leaving the burial site, when "Something happened. Something touched my back like I had never felt before. I literally left the ground. I had chills. I knew immediately it was Lost Bird's spirit coming with me."

Brian visits Lost Bird's grave every Valentine's day -- the anniversary of her death.

I lay flowers and ceremonial tobacco prayer ties on her grave. In 2013 I rubbed my left hand across the word 'Lost' on her headstone. A few days later, my watch began to malfunction. A jeweler told me that my battery was 'burnt up'. I realized it was on the arm that was touching the headstone. I had always heard that spirits use electrical energy to communicate.

On subsequent visits to the grave in 2014 and 2015, Brian again noticed electrical phenomena. In 2014,

I went to Lost Bird's grave and took out my iPhone 5 that was fully charged. From YouTube I pulled up the Lakota Healing Song, which is five minutes long. I placed the phone on the grave. At the end of the song, I picked up my phone and noticed it was completely drained. I showed my girlfriend. As we got in the car, she saw a strange kind of bird circling overhead. Then that bird flew about nine feet above, as if it was escorting us. I told her it was a Scissor-Tail Flycatcher -- the state bird of my state of Oklahoma. Later I found there had only been 12 reported sightings in the history of South Dakota. This time of year it should be in Central America. Was this, I wondered, a lost bird or Lost Bird?

On Valentine's Day 2015, Brian again played the Lakota Healing Song on a fully-charged phone. The phone was drained again. This time, in the photographs taken by his girlfriend, there seemed to be a mysterious mist surrounding Brian, despite no visible fog.

He also experienced signs of an electrical nature back at St Joseph's in the area where Lost Bird had gone to school. "I had left my car in a parking lot close to the Missouri River," he told me.

It was dark and I looked up at this storage building that was used as a chicken coop in the early 1900's. The flood light was not on. What I did next is unexplainable. I asked 'Zintka, Zintkala Nuni, were you here?' Immediately the light came on. I got in my car and drove off. The next day I asked the maintenance guys if that light was on a timer or sensor and they said no.

About a year later, Brian was on the school's playground sitting on a bench and he noticed the light on the old building was out again. He asked the same question "Zintka, were you here?" and immediately it came on. When other adults asked what had happened, Brian repeated the question three more times, each time with the same result, to the wonder of the onlookers. "Each time I received an answer exactly after I asked, with no delay."

All my experiences with Lost Bird are comforting to me and unexplainable," he told me.

I believe she is my guiding spirit and knows that I was brought to South Dakota to help her people. She knows that my passion in life is helping the most forgotten and underserved people of a land that was originally theirs.

Like Martin Luther King, Brian George has a dream -- to unify, lead and be a vocal advocate for a better quality of life for all Native Americans.

Reservation life has many of the same challenges as our inner cities and other third-world countries," he said, "the difference being the lack of attention by mainstream America. I embrace becoming the leader who will bring this to light. I want to launch the revival of

the Native cultures. Our commonalities are closer than our differences. This is a time for forgiveness. I want to create this foundation, to help Native Americans in the areas of education, housing and rehabilitation.

The centerpiece of Brian's plan is to bring back the 40 acres of land that surrounds the graves of Wounded Knee. "I want to bring that land back to the Lakota people -- and not as a tourist occasion."

Brian has even written the speech he would give on the sacred ground to mark that moment.

"Let us not dwell on yesterday's injustices and broken treaties," he would say,

so we can reap the rewards of tomorrow's dreams and blessings from the Creator. We must replace bitterness with forgiveness. Forgiveness of the past is the pathway to the future. Let today mark the beginning of a new era in our stormy and storied relations...As Native people, we must join together and honor all that is right. The return of these lands is honorable and right.

No doubt Lost Bird, who spent her short life trying to get back to Wounded Knee, but returned only after her death, would agree.

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/joan-gage/could-lost-birds-tragedy-inspire-a-triumph-for-native-americans_b_7207516.html

Students Get Minds Blown By Learning Indigenous Ways

[Christina Rose](#)
5/5/15

Students at the University of Massachusetts were treated to a lecture on life through indigenous eyes by Ramona Peters, Bear Clan, Mashpee Wampanoag. Peters is the Tribal Historic Preservation Officer and Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act director for her tribe. Besides speaking about her work, she took the students on a journey they had not known was possible.

Jocelyn Figlock, a student in the class entitled "Indigenous Women, Mother Tongues, and Nation Building," was moved nearly to tears by Peter's talk. For Figlock and other students, the indigenous perspective is a new one. "American culture is very focused on the self and all about you. Ramona started the talk with, 'I am not going to talk about myself, that is not what we do. We talk about the land.' It hit me hard," Figlock said. "It's a common sense way of thinking that is not so common. It's beautifully based in—it's more... That's what it is. It's more."

Amy Den Ouden, associate professor in the Women's and Gender Studies Department at UMass Boston and one of the co-instructors of the course, explained: "I see a lot of important changes in the students. Many have a real awakening—a historical awakening and a personal awakening. I don't think there is a way for young people to learn about indigenous history and the ongoing struggles without, as Ramona said, doing some real work on connectedness."

Speaking quietly to 60 students in a large lecture hall, Peters spoke for an hour on a variety of topics, of times when humans were quieter and more emotionally connected to themselves and others—when intuition was the method of reading the wampum belts. "Whoever drilled the holes was the historian who breathed the story into the beads. You had to be somewhat psychic to read it and everybody at one time was that. The wampum design was simply the cover of the book," Peters said.



Students gathered around Ramona Peters, center, after a lecture given at the University of Massachusetts Women's and Gender Studies Department. (Christina Rose)

When Peters referred to the land, it was in terms most of the students had never heard before. "In tribal traditions, we talk about our relations—not just human, but the land, the water and all the things that dwell there. When we neglect the earth, we do not feed it with our attention. Attention is nourishment."

Den Ouden said the students learn a number of concepts, like: "How do we feel our connection to others? What does respect and reciprocity mean? These are fundamental indigenous concepts that our students are working on. This is something they have to

work through, throughout the semester. For some students it can be challenge, and frustrating. It's not simple for them," she said. "They knew the mythology of Native Americans but they didn't know about indigenous experiences, knowledge, history, and perspectives of indigenous people and particularly women."

"Native American and Indigenous Studies programs are dramatically changing non-Native perceptions about Native people. There is a stronger and stronger presence of indigenous educational knowledge in university curriculum now, and I think it is having a significant impact," Den Ouden said.

As part of the civic engagement aspect, students wrote opinion editorials to local newspapers and letters to senators asking the State of Massachusetts to support the Mashpee Wampanoag Language program. Students working with Jennifer Weston, the Lakota director of the program, began developing legislature based on similar language programs in Montana.

"To do that, they had to have a solid understanding of indigenous women's leadership in language revitalization," Den Ouden said. "Bringing in speakers enabled students to participate in meaningful conversations with indigenous women leaders in language revitalization, health, land issues, and the epidemic of sexual violence against Native women in North America."

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/05/students-get-minds-blown-learning-indigenous-ways-160245>

Republican Senators in Colorado Kill More Native American Legislation

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

5/5/15

Senate Republicans at the Colorado State Legislature killed a bill Monday that would've provided in-state tuition costs for Native Americans with historic ties to the state.

The bill, sponsored by Democratic House Representative Joe Salazar, died within days of his [Indian mascot bill](#) that, had it passed, would've regulated the use of Native American mascots at schools throughout Colorado.

Also killed on Monday by Senate Republicans was HB 1267, which would've allowed a person to challenge a district attorney's decision not to prosecute a law enforcement official whose force resulted in serious bodily injury or death, Salazar said.

“Last week and early this week proved to be a bloodbath in the Colorado Senate involving bills that would have helped communities of color,” Salazar wrote to *ICTMN*.

After the in-state tuition bill died, Salazar took to Facebook and vowed to reintroduce the bill in 2016.

"I will come back next year until they understand that this is a goodness owed to the First Peoples of this state who were forcibly removed," he wrote.



Joseph Salazar

Yesterday at 2:36pm · 11

I have never been more frustrated with the political process as I am today with Senate Republicans.

The In-State Tuition for American Indians Whose Tribe have Historic Ties to Colorado died at the hands of Senate Republicans in the Senate State Affairs Committee.

It will come back next year until they understand that this a goodness owed to the First Peoples of this state who were forcibly removed. — with Sarah Ortegon and 11 others at Colorado State Capitol.

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This was Salazar's second attempt at passing such a bill. Last year, Senator Mary Hodge referred to it as "reparations" for Native Americans.

“I don’t know how long we can make reparations [to Native Americans] or how far we’d have to go back,” she [told](#) *ICTMN*. “I guess my point is we can’t fix what we did.”

When *The Denver Post* [asked](#) Hodge about her reparations comment she declined to respond.

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/05/republican-senators-colorado-kill-more-native-american-legislation-160266>

Candidate Mike Huckabee Connects Native Americans With Jihadists During Speech; DNC Responds

[Simon Moya-Smith](#)

5/6/15

In an attempt to criticize President Barack Obama, Mike Huckabee, the former governor of Arkansas, instead offended Native Americans by connecting them with jihadists during a speech Tuesday when he announced his candidacy for president.

During his speech in Hope, Arkansas, Huckabee, who is formerly a Southern Baptist pastor, excoriated Obama for comments he made during the annual National Prayer Breakfast in February when, in reference to Islamic terrorism, he reminded his fellow Christians that they, too, have committed horrendous acts in the name of Christianity throughout the annals of human history.

“And lest we get on our high horse and think this is unique to some other place, remember that during the Crusades and the Inquisition, people committed terrible deeds in the name of Christ. In our home country, slavery and Jim Crow all too often was justified in the name of Christ,” Obama said.

On Tuesday, Huckabee told a raucous crowd of supporters that he wonders who Obama cheers for when watching 1950s western cinema.



John Wayne and Henry Fonda star in "Fort Apache."

"When I hear our current president say he wants Christians to get off their high horse so we can make nice with radical jihadists, I wonder if he can watch a western from the '50s and be able to figure out who the good guys and the bad guys really are," Huckabee said.

In a statement sent to *ICTMN*, Eric Walker, spokesperson for the [Democratic National Committee](#), called Huckabee's comment a "cheap joke" and said Native Americans deserve not to be compared to jihadists.

"Mike Huckabee has spent his entire career offending Americans of all stripes – African Americans, Jews, Mormons, LGBT Americans to name a few – and now with these recent comments, he can add Native Americans to this growing list," he said. "Native Americans have a proud heritage, and deserve better than to be compared to jihadists as part of a GOP candidate's cheap joke. Sadly, this is what people have come to expect from GOP candidates who constantly push policies and views that are harmful to Americans. Mike Huckabee's offensive, outdated, and divisive social views have no place in the 21st century."

Huckabee is the latest in a growing chorus of Republican candidates vying for the presidency, but not the first to fall into disrepute with Native Americans.

Senator Rand Paul, who [announced](#) his bid in April, called for the abolishment of the Bureau of Indian Affairs [BIA] when he first took office in 2011 and has not commented whether he would eliminate the BIA should he become the 44th president in 2016.

Watch Mike Huckabee's full speech. He connects Native Americans with jihadists starting at min. 14:45: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=000uvNgzVrA>

Read more at <http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2015/05/06/video-candidate-mike-huckabee-connects-native-americans-jihadists-during-speech-dnc>

Watch the 7th Generation Rise on 'Rebel Music: Native America'

'I have a responsibly. If we don't pick up that fight, who will?' says rapper/activist Frank Waln.

by [Gil Kaufman](#) 3h ago

The sounds echo for generations... well before these states were united. Well before North America's indigenous people were forced from their land by settlers.

“No matter where you live in America, you’re living on occupied land that indigenous people were murdered,” says rapper/activist Frank Waln at the outset of “Native America: 7th Generation Rises,” the latest episode of MTV’s [“Rebel Music.”](#) The half-hour special, which debuted on [MTV’s YouTube channel](#), is a deep look at the mindset and musical response of young Native American musicians and activists using their voices to speak truth to their sometimes difficult daily reality.

A promotional image for MTV's "Rebel Music: Native America" featuring a group of young Native American musicians and activists. The image has an orange tint. In the center, a quote by Frank Waln is displayed in a black box. The MTV logo and Amnesty International logo are in the top right. The "REBEL MUSIC NATIVE AMERICA" logo is in the bottom left. A red banner with the URL "YOUTUBE.COM/MTV" is in the bottom right.

**“The music is
my shield and
my weapon.”**

-Frank Waln, rapper/activist

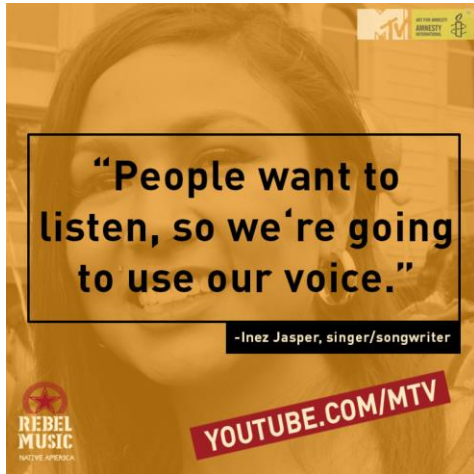
YOUTUBE.COM/MTV

**REBEL
MUSIC**
NATIVE AMERICA

MTV/Rebel Music

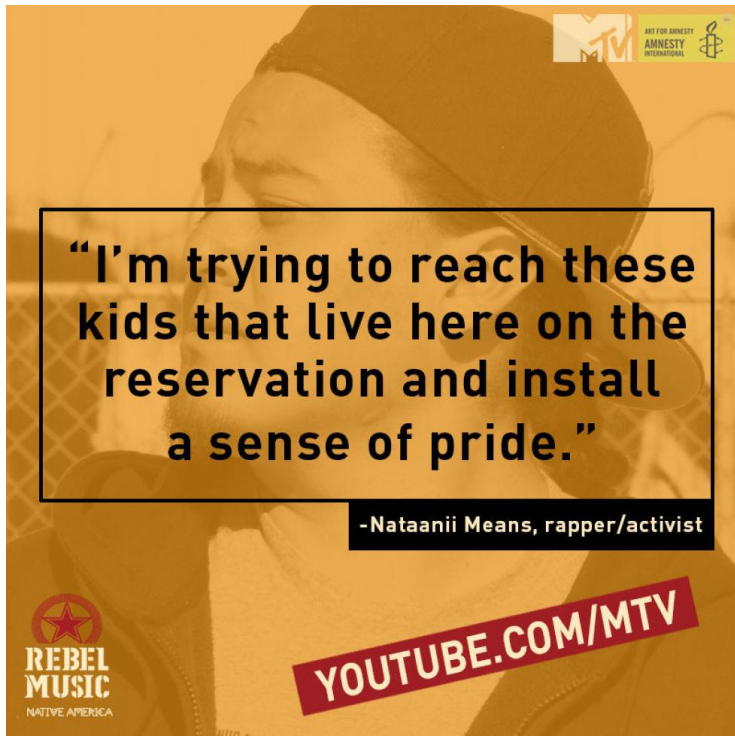
Drawing from the high rates of sexual violence against Native women and high suicide rates among Native teens, musicians like Inez Jasper from Chilliwack, British Columbia, look to create positivity and inspiration with such uplifting anthems as “Dancin’ on the Run,” a plea for unity punctuated by traditional animal-skin drum beats over an EDM swirl of sound.

“The 7th Generation is going to rise in America and all the world is going to see these young kids saving the earth,” says activist Robin Lebeau. This generation isn’t just writing songs as a creative outlet, but also as a means to tell stories, to wake up minds and to speak out against the continued injustices they see perpetrated against their people.



These activists and artists are bound by a single prophecy, which says that out of a time of crisis, a 7th generation will rise to restore the Earth’s balance. They may be that generation, and the burden of being that change is firmly on their shoulders. And it’s a weight they’re happy to carry in the hope that they can change even one life and lift their people to greatness.

Chinle, Arizona, rapper Nataanii Means knows that the highest suicide rates in the nation are found among Native people and hopes his music can help turn that statistic around. “With my music I’m trying to reach these kids... I’ll be successful if just one kid comes up to me and tells me my music helped him,” he says.



Taking a common refrain heard around the nation over the past year in relation to the death of young black men at the hands of police, Means' friend and collaborator Mike "Witko" Cliff adds, "native lives matter," a refrain heard at demonstrations demanding fair police treatment of Native people.

South Dakota's Waln says the lessons he was taught about the traumatic treatment of indigenous people struck a deep chord within him, inspiring a look around his home on the Rosebud Reservation and seeking inspiration from his people's story. "I think there's a connection between traditional storytelling and hip-hop," he says of the way he weaves beats, rhymes and NA music with lessons about protecting the Earth and each other. "My people have been storytellers for thousands of years and this is just a new way to tell our story."

Facing the threat of the controversial Keystone pipeline cutting twice through South Dakota's Ogallala Aquifer — a key source of water for Waln's reservation — the rapper joined a movement rallying against the project that could destroy the land if oil were to leak from it.

"My ancestors fought and died for me to even be alive," he says about the thoughts that helped inspire his song, "Oil 4 Blood," which rails against the proposed pipeline. "I have a responsibility. If we don't pick up that fight, who will?... The only thing I knew how to do is write a song."



Just as Waln has taken up the cause of fighting Keystone, Jasper focuses much of her attention on bringing light to the problem of missing and murdered native women and girls. "It's the system that it to blame and the system needs to take responsibly for it," she says of the historical stereotypes and trauma that may have contributed to the nearly 1,200 cases of missing or murdered indigenous women.



MTV/Rebel Music

So, while Waln travels to Washington to urge President Obama to veto Keystone (which he did), Jasper organizes self-defense classes and songwriting workshops for girls as a

means of empowerment and strength. It's more than music and goes beyond dreams of stardom or fame. It's a gift that, literally, gives back and inspires.

"I know that I'm one person and I can't change the world," Jasper says. "But I can hopefully use my pull as an artist to influence my audience and hopefully we together can make some change. We can empower the young women like my daughter to learn how to walk through this world boldly but carefully."

Tune in every week for new episodes of "Rebel Music," which premiere each Thursday on YouTube.com/MTV.

Direct Link: <http://www.mtv.com/news/2154171/rebel-music-native-america-7th-generation-rises/>

Meet The Woman Helping Native American Communities Get Ready For Climate Change

Posted: 05/06/2015 5:15 pm EDT Updated: 05/07/2015 2:59 am EDT



(Photo: Karen Diver/Fond du Lac)

This article is part of [a Huffington Post series](#), on the occasion of the site's 10th anniversary, looking at some of the people and issues that will shape the world in the next decade.

The effects of climate change are already being felt across America. In Alaska, rising sea levels and eroding coastlines have forced [a dozen different communities](#) to relocate. In the Southwest, the risk of forest fires is increasing, water supplies are dwindling and

native animal species are coming under threat. Scientists estimate that if left unchecked, climate change will affect millions of Americans in the years to come.

American Indian communities are among the most vulnerable as the planet warms, and they've been at the forefront of the movement to address climate change. One of the leaders who has emerged is Karen Diver, the chairwoman of the Fond du Lac Band of Lake Superior Chippewa, an American Indian tribal community in northeastern Minnesota. Last year, Diver was one of two tribal representatives who served on President Barack Obama's [Task Force On Climate Resilience](#), and she pushed the government to adopt a greater sense of urgency in tackling climate change.

The situation in some native communities, particularly in Alaska, is "dire," Diver told The Huffington Post in a recent interview. "Raising awareness about how immediate the danger is took a lot of people by surprise."

The task force recommended a host of solutions. The federal government, it said, should give local communities access to better climate projections and mapping technologies, so they can consider different scenarios when they're making decisions about land use. The task force also called on the government to take the lead in encouraging communities to plan for flooding and other climate-related hazards, and said the government should remove certain federal policies that might act as barriers to such development. Finally, the group called for more federal support for improving energy, water use and transportation systems to better serve a world affected by climate change. The task force's recommendations are meant to help communities plan for a future where planetary warming is not a theoretical possibility, but a certainty.

Representing the interests of the United States' 566 federally recognized tribes was no easy task. "We had no way to really communicate with all the people we were being charged to advocate for," said Reggie Joule, the mayor of the Northwest Arctic Borough and Diver's fellow tribal representative on the White House task force. Diver, he said, was a "workhorse," putting in long hours outside her regular job as tribal chairwoman. Given budgets and travel time, it was impossible to visit every community, said Diver, which meant organizing a lot of conference calls and webinars to bring tribes together virtually.

Another task force colleague, Mayor James Brainard of Carmel, Indiana, described Diver as "very disarming" with "a lot of common sense," as well as "an extremely sharp businesswoman."

As chairwoman of the Fond du Lac for the past eight years, Diver, 50, has been a trailblazer on environmental issues at home. In 2007, she got the tribe to sign on to the Kyoto Protocol, the treaty obligating the world's biggest polluters to make emissions cuts -- and she did so after the United States itself declined to sign. Fond du Lac's 4,200 residents are spread over 100,000 acres, about 20 miles west of Duluth.

"We recognize that we have more work to do, and we're not as prepared as we should be for the outcomes of climate change," said Diver. "By participating in efforts like this and helping our own learning and leading, it will help us better serve our community."

Signing the Kyoto Protocol was also a natural fit for Fond du Lac, where people still hunt, fish, trap, net and spear their own food. "Culturally, we're more connected to habitat and natural resources," said Diver. "We're smaller, so it's easier to wrap your arms around [the issue] and make more immediate decisions."

The residents of Fond du Lac have seen the effects of climate change at home, observing stressors on various wildlife -- like moose, whose populations [have been dwindling](#) in Minnesota. They're also seeing more ticks and other invasive species. They're trying to reintroduce elk, a species native to the area that had been previously hunted out of the region, because "it can handle greater extremes of weather and seems to be more resilient," said Diver.

The community has also lowered the energy use of its buildings, installed more efficient lighting and created a small solar project. It's implemented policies to cut down on the amount of time the school buses idle, and started a public transit system for other residents. As a result, Fond du Lac is on track to hit its Kyoto goal of cutting overall energy use by 15 percent and deriving 5 percent of its power from renewables by the end of 2017 -- three years ahead of schedule, Diver said. The success has prompted the community to try and increase its cuts to 20 percent by 2025.

"It's just smart economics to not use more energy than you need to," said Diver.



Diver releases a yearling sturgeon into the St. Louis River as part of the Fond du Lac Band's sturgeon restoration program. (Photo courtesy of Karen Diver)

Addressing climate change is only a tiny part of Diver's day-to-day work. She also manages the policies and business affairs of the Fond du Lac, who own the Black Bear Casino Resort. "Fond du Lac went from fairly extraordinary poverty in the 1970s and early '80s, then with the advent of gaming, grew fairly quickly," Diver said. The tribal

government has also grown, from around 100 employees a few decades ago to more than 2,000 today.

That growth is part of what prompted Diver to run for chairwoman. "We grew, but in many cases without being really thoughtful about the how and why and whether or not we were doing it most efficiently," she said. "So I was most interested not only in service delivery for our community and that type of problem-solving, but also focusing some attention on the institution of government itself."

Diver's path to leadership has been atypical. When she was a 20-year-old single mother with a 5-year-old daughter, she picked up and moved from Ohio to Minnesota to attend college. Diver's parents, originally from Fond du Lac, had been moved to Ohio under the Indian Relocation Act, a 1956 law that was meant to encourage natives to leave reservations for urban areas. Diver returned to Minnesota in order to access tribal scholarship money so she could go to college.

Diver's daughter, Rochelle, remembers taking long bus rides on frigid winter mornings so her mother could get to her undergraduate classes at the University of Minnesota Duluth. Diver would bring her daughter to class when she had to, and Rochelle remembers a day when she herself answered a professor's question in class, having sat through so many lectures with her mom. Years later, as an undergraduate at the same school, Rochelle ended up in the same professor's class.

"I remember watching her work so, so hard since I was so young," Rochelle told HuffPost. "As I've become an adult, I've been so thankful for her struggle. I realize how hard it must have been for her."

But, she said, "it isn't a struggle I felt. Even though it was just her, and we were trying to make it, I always had what all the other kids had." She remembers ballet lessons, and the sacrifices her mother made to afford them.

Diver got her degree in economics and went on to work for the YWCA in Duluth, where she served as executive director from 1991 to 2003. She left to attend graduate school at Harvard's Kennedy School of Government, where she researched governance in Indian country at the Project on American Indian Economic Development. She ran for tribal chair shortly after returning from Boston. She filled out a partial term after her first election, and has been re-elected twice.

"She's very driven, very focused on her work," said Chuck Walt, Fond du Lac's executive director. "She likes to get things done." He added that Diver "can be a little impatient sometimes," and that "some people may feel like she's a little too driven," but he said it's earned her respect in the community.

Of all her accomplishments in Fond du Lac, said Diver, two she's most proud of are increasing the transparency in tribal government and encouraging greater citizen involvement. "That's a double-edged sword as an elected official," she said. "When you

invite commentary, you don't necessarily get to pick what those are. But that's OK, because when people finally have a voice, they practice on you. That comes with the territory." She said she hasn't decided yet whether she will run for another term in 2016.

Her daughter, meanwhile, has gone on to advocate for health and human rights issues as the environmental health program coordinator at the International Indian Treaty Council. She attributes her career path to a lifetime of watching her mother.

"I feel like that is 100 percent of why I have such a passion for our native people, for human rights and making the world a better place," said Rochelle. "I felt that passion growing up."

Diver says she's proud that she helped impress upon the White House the seriousness of climate change. "I see the Obama administration making this a priority," she said. "I expect that the recommendations will continue to get priority from the different federal departments."

Still, she recognizes that the fight is far from over. "Of course, as someone who inhabits the Earth, I worry about the long term, and that the commitment won't survive this administration," she said. "Because the effects of climate change are going to survive this administration."

Direct Link: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2015/05/06/karen-diver-climate-change_n_7191098.html